

Hafa Adai!

Torres pleads with BOE members to drop injunction. **PAGE 3**

Unemployment aid being readied for those who lost jobs. **PAGE 5**

75¢

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3 more test positive

By JUSTINE NAUTA
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REPORTER

Three more persons tested positive for the coronavirus yesterday, soon after the second COVID-19-related death in the CNMI last April 7, according to a statement from the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force.

The three individuals include two males, ages 45 and 53, and one 53-year-old female. The new cases raise the CNMI's total of positive coronavirus cases to 11.

According to the statement, the three individuals are being closely monitored by the Commonwealth Health Care Corp. at the Kanoa Resort in Susupe, where they are in isolation.

CHCC is now doing "con-

» Commonwealth now has 11 cases

tact tracing"—identifying the people with whom a sick person has recently been in contact with—with the three individuals' most immediate family members and close friends.

Additionally, CHCC is working with the COVID-19 Task Force to identify more

See **POSITIVE** on **Page 4**

Telesource get 2 more years to run Tinian power plant

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

The Commonwealth Utilities Corp. has extended for two more years Telesource CNMI Inc.'s contract to run CUC's power plant on Tinian, according to CUC executive director Gary P. Camacho yesterday.

Camacho said the two-year contract took effect

last April 1 and will end on April 1, 2022.

He underscored the importance of giving Telesource the extension as this will give the company time to address some provisions in the previous contract, which had expired last March 31.

He said the company failed to comply

See **TELESOURCE** on **Page 4**



Camacho



File photo shows one of the entrances to the Commonwealth Health Center in Garapan. CHC is now prohibiting all vehicles from parking at the upper level parking area of the hospital on Navy Hill, where a 50-bed field hospital will be installed

KRIZEL TUAZON

Just before curfew

By BEA CABRERA
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CORRESPONDENT

Author's Note: This piece aims to enlighten and show that the more accurately we

apprehend the world, the more deeply we can appreciate it and do our part to help. All names have been changed to protect the identity of the interviewees.

A group of friends, not more than 10, met up for dinner two nights ago, which nowadays starts on a new time—"5-ish"—so every-

See **CURFEW** on **Page 4**

AT A GLANCE

As of 6pm, April 7, 2020

GUAM	CNMI
Positive: 124	Positive: 11
Recovered: 31	Negative: 27
Deaths: 4	Pending: 6
	Deaths: 2

Source: Joint Information Center-Guam, Commonwealth Health Care Corp

NYC virus deaths exceed 4,000

By MARINA VILLENEUVE and LORI HINNANT
ASSOCIATED PRESS

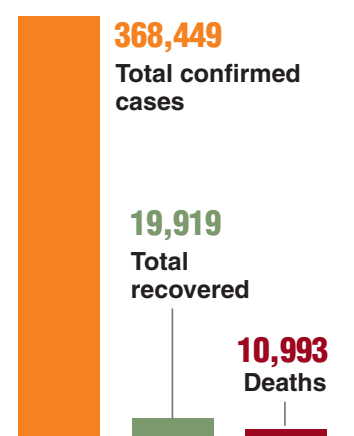
NEW YORK (AP)—New York City's death toll from the coronavirus rose past 4,000 on Tuesday, eclipsing the number killed at the World Trade Center on 9/11. In Britain, Prime Minister Boris Johnson lay in intensive care, believed to be the first major world leader hospitalized with the virus.

The twin developments came even as the crisis seemed to be easing or at least stabilizing, by some measures, in New York and

See **NYC** on **Page 4**

U.S. cases, recoveries, deaths

As of 8 a.m. April 7



Source: Johns Hopkins CSSE
Graphic: Staff, TNS

INSIDE



BUSINESS

Caravan of Greens aims to bring fresh produce closer to the community.

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ASIA

The last restrictions on movement are lifted in Wuhan after 11 weeks of lockdown.

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LIFE & STYLE

J.K. Rowling has revealed a two-week battle, now over, with a probable case of coronavirus.

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Local

WITH SOCIAL DISTANCING REQUIREMENTS

Chief prosecutor says their job now is quite a challenge

By **FERDIE DE LA TORRE**
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REPORTER

With social distancing required as a means to minimize coronavirus transmission, how are CNMI prosecutors handling cases and dealing with investigators, victims, and staff? It's been "quite a challenge," according to Chief Prosecutor John Bradley yesterday.

Bradley said the twin requirements of adapting to the distancing requirements while

keeping a criminal docket current has been difficult "but we are committed to keeping the wheels of justice moving."

When asked how they are managing their cases during

» **Prosecutors resort to wonders of the internet**

this coronavirus crisis, Bradley disclosed that prosecutors have all been able to set up offices in their homes, using laptops and "the wonders of the internet." Bradley said their staff were able to connect to their central database, giving them access to working

files and the records related to their criminal cases. The prosecutors also communicate regularly with email and texting. For larger meeting, prosecutors have switched to using the Zoom application for video conferencing.

"I have found it to be an amazing piece of software, much better than Skype," said Bradley, adding that they can all appear onscreen and have great discussions, smoothly resolving their legal matters.

As to the question of how the CNMI Judiciary could



File photo shows the Office of the Attorney General's Criminal Division in Susupe.

FERDIE DE LA TORRE

improve services during these hard times, the chief prosecutor said that working with the courts have been a bit trickier because there are so many different people in different locations.

Bradley, however, pointed out that the local courts have been working hard to set up telephonic and video connections, providing a safe space for everyone. He pointed out that the courts recently adopted a new rule to permit electronic filing

for criminal cases.

"We hope to improve the use of technology so that we can do just about everything [online] except hold a trial," he said.



Bradley

Bradley would like to see the traffic court resume so that people can resolve their citations.

He also acknowledged the "amazing" work of his office's support staff, victim advocates, and investigators for the Office of the Attorney General's Criminal Division. He said

they are rotating their duties to maintain good distancing.

Bradley said he has been impressed with the calm and friendly manner everyone has shown despite strange times. "We continue to serve the public and protect the community," he said. "But don't get me wrong. I prefer to be in the office and meeting people directly."

Bradley is confident that all people will come out of this pandemic with a stronger appreciation for human relationships. "I pray that everyone continue to be safe and calm," he added.

Attao: Stimulus money could help NMI economy

By **IVA MAURIN**
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REPORTER

With a projection of merely \$21 million left to run the entire CNMI government for the rest of the fiscal year, brought by the unprecedented impact of the COVID-19 to tourism, the islands' only industry, the administration is scrambling to cut costs to ensure that services addressing the community's needs will still be met.

All is not lost, however, especially with the CNMI receiving part of the \$2-trillion stimulus money that was made available through the federal government, under the emergency relief package, to help the entire United States deal with the coronavirus pandemic.

House Speaker Blas Jonathan Attao (R-Saipan) is hopeful that the stimulus money coming into the CNMI could help generate economic activity, which would then give the Department of Finance

new figures, for a new budget proposal.

"We will get a new budget proposal by July 1," Attao said in an interview with *Saipan Tribune*. "I'm not sure how much money is going to be coming to the CNMI or the territories, but any money would definitely infuse economic activity."

The speaker, as examples, said that people who will get the unemployment payment would have more purchasing power, and that excise taxes can be paid, generating economic activity to an extent, which should help the economy improve.

"On top of that, it would give us additional collections and the additional collections would pipe down into the taxes. Hopefully...a lot of the activities will happen in April, May, June so that the numbers for July can be different, and we may have a different proposal come to life, first from the administration, and we'll address the budget

from there."

Attao added that the CNMI government still has to be cognizant of the current budget and be very conservative in appropriations of the money and how funds are utilized.

"Whatever money that we can build into the budget in regards to fees, taxes, or whatever other means, that will help generate additional revenues for 2021, and we can actually increase the budget to that extent."

The House speaker also said that the stimulus package will "definitely assist" in generating economic activity, recognizing that the CNMI might still not have tourists in the next few months.

"Tourism is a very, very big part of our economic lives here in the CNMI, but we also got to be cognizant that there are still people living here, there are still businesses here, so people are spending money and people are running their businesses, and they are paying their taxes."

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Torres pleads with BOE members to drop injunction

By IVA MAURIN

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REPORTER

A week before CNMI government retirees get their latest pension, Gov. Ralph DLG Torres yet again pleaded with the Board of Education yesterday to drop the injunction it initiated, saying that doing so will enable the government to pay those pensions in full and not at just 75% of the amount, as it earlier announced.

"I am here again pleading

with the three board members: If you drop the injunction, I will be able to pay our retirees their 25% for the remaining of the year as well as next year," the governor said in a video clip posted on the Office of the Governor's Facebook page on Tuesday. In it, Torres appealed to board members Philip Long, Marylou Ada, and Andrew Orsini to drop the injunction, saying this will allow the government to

pay the retirees in full.

According to Torres, the three board members are requiring him to pay the Public School System roughly \$10.7 million—a quarter of the \$43 million that the government has to pay the Settlement Fund under a court order.

Torres said he basically begged the three not to file the injunction while the Commonwealth is experiencing COVID-19, which has shut down tourism, the CNMI's

sole industry.

"We've always worked well with [BOE] chairperson Janice Tenorio, vice chair Sgt. Major Herman Atalig, and [Education Commissioner] Dr. Alfred Ada," he said. "We continued to have a strong communication and we continued to give our appropriated amount to PSS. We have never been short and we have always made sure to take care of what the Legislature has appropriated for PSS."

According to Torres, the administration met with the BOE, House Speaker Blas Jonathan Attao (R-Saipan), Senate President Victor Hocog (R-Saipan), Attorney General Edward Manibusan, and all their respective attorneys, and agreed that whatever the actual collection would be, that the PSS' 25% will be provided.

Long, Ada, and Orsini approved filing the injunction a week after, said Torres, despite "numerous [pleas] to please not file the injunction because it would definitely jeopardize our retirees' 25%."

"The government pays retirees roughly \$14 million every year and they want to tack 25% on top of that. Again roughly \$3 million, that equates to \$14 million," Torres said, leaving him with two options: give PSS \$14 million based on what the three board members want, or give the retirees \$14 million.

The governor said he had no other choice as of Tuesday night.

RELATED NEWS

Message to government retirees and PSS. **PAGE 9**

Ex-IPI contractor withdraws motion for default judgment

A former construction contractor for Imperial Pacific International (CNMI) LLC has agreed to withdraw its motion for entry of default against IPI in connection with its defamation lawsuit.

U.S.A. Fanter Corp. Ltd. and IPI, through their counsel, have agreed to withdraw the motion for entry of default to allow IPI to respond to the lawsuit by April 22.

Samuel I. Mok is counsel for U.S.A. Fanter. Attorney Cong Nie of the O'Connor Berman Horey & Baner law firm informed the U.S. District Court for the NMI yesterday

that they will serve as counsel for IPI in this lawsuit.

Last Tuesday, U.S.A. Fanter filed the motion for entry of default against IPI for allegedly failing to respond to its defamation lawsuit.

In that motion, Mok said the lawsuit was filed last Feb. 24 and that IPI was personally served through its registered agent with the summons and complaint last March 11.

U.S.A. Fanter is suing IPI for issuing statements published in two newspapers that allegedly contained libelous statements. The plaintiff asked the court to hold IPI liable to

pay unspecified damages. The company also asked the court to require IPI to make a public retraction of the false and defamatory statements.

IPI stated that U.S.A. Fanter purportedly lied about the actual construction work performed, issued false reports, forged project quantity numbers, forged a payment, fabricated units of material used, fabricated prices, and double-billed for work performed.

Mok said in the complaint that IPI's statements were false and defamatory and that U.S.A. Fanter's business reputation was adversely affected

as a result.

U.S.A. Fanter has filed a separate lawsuit in federal court against IPI for allegedly refusing to pay \$2.08 million for construction work related to the VIP wing and exterior work on IPI's hotel-casino that's being built in Garapan.

U.S.A. Fanter also asked the court to attach a mechanic's lien to IPI's interests in the real property on the project. A mechanic's lien refers to a security interest in the title to property for the benefit of those who have supplied labor or materials that improve the property. *(Ferdie de la Torre)*

COTA to get \$1M under CARES Act

By IVA MAURIN

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REPORTER

The CNMI will get a million dollars to help with COVID-19 related transportation needs, through the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act.

Alfreda P. Camacho, the special assistant for Public Transportation, said that the Federal Transit Administration notified the CNMI last week that the Commonwealth Office of Transit Authority will be receiving \$1,047,695. In his e-newsletter, Delegate Gregorio Kili C. Sablan (Ind-MP) said that funding will be provided at a 100% federal share.

"[The funds] will be available to support operating, capital, and other expenses, including paying for administrative leave for transit personnel due to reduced operations, incurred beginning Jan. 20, 2020, to prevent, prepare for, and respond to COVID-19," Sablan added.

The newly-enacted CARES Act provides \$25 billion to transit agencies in the United States, to help to prevent, prepare for, and respond to the COVID-19 pandemic.

COTA has been leading the COVID-19 Task Force's quarantine mission assignment, with its entire fleet of buses and vans activated to transport all incoming CNMI travelers, who are required to undergo a 14-day



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Alfreda P. Camacho, the special assistant for Public Transportation, poses with some of her staff at the Commonwealth Office of Transit Authority,

mandatory quarantine, to the designated quarantine site.

In an earlier interview, Camacho said that COTA, with all the other departments tapped as essential to serve the community during the pandemic, has been stepping up, as the CNMI continues to tighten measures to protect and safeguard everyone from the virus.

"With all the hard work from every single agency involved, we will continue carrying out

that mission every day. COTA is proud to serve our community in whatever way we can and we are proud to be a part of a task force full of agencies that have that same mindset," said Camacho.

Last year, COTA was awarded \$1.33 million to continue the development of its fixed-route, and demand response shared ride service, to ensure transportation access and services for hard-to-reach areas around the island.

HANMI occupancy at 12% in March

The Hotel Association of the Northern Mariana Islands reported a 12% average occupancy rate among 10 member-hotels for March 2020. The figure reflects an 84% decrease for HANMI hotels compared to March 2019 and a 67% decrease in the number of total rooms sold.

A total of 8,764 of 73,300 available room nights sold during the month, compared to 114,866 of 221,125 available room night sold in March 2019. Average room rates were \$145.76 compared to \$140.39 last March.

"Prior to the announcement of our first two cases of COVID-19, we had been expecting arrivals back beginning on April 28. Although we have not yet received any confirmation as to whether this date has been moved, we must prepare for the worse," said HANMI chair Gloria Cavanagh. "Today we focus on keeping our

community safe and healthy. A couple of our hotel members have been tapped to help in the quarantining of both 'persons of interest' and 'persons under investigation' for COVID-19. Without their cooperation, the CNMI would be left with very limited options to segregate more potential spread. To our community, do your part, practice social distancing, good hygiene, and stay at home as much as possible. Let's be #MARIANASSTRONG!"

Hotels included in HANMI's monthly statistical report are Aqua Resort Club, Century Hotel, GrandVrio Resort Saipan, Fiesta Resort & Spa, Hyatt Regency Saipan, Kanoa Resort Saipan, Kensington Hotel Saipan, LaoLao Bay Golf & Resort, Saipan World Resort, and Pacific Islands Club Saipan. Statistics from Aquarius Beach Tower, representing 43 rooms, are not included this month. *(PR)*

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NYC

From Page 1

parts of Europe, though health officials warned people at nearly every turn not to let their guard down. After 76 days, China finally lifted the lockdown on Wuhan, the city of 11 million where the outbreak began.

COVID-19's toll in New York City is now more than 1,000 deaths higher than that of the deadliest terror attack on U.S. soil, which killed 2,753 people in the city and 2,977 overall, when hijacked planes slammed into the twin towers, the Pentagon and a Pennsylvania field on Sept. 11, 2001.

New York state recorded 731 new coronavirus deaths, its biggest one-day jump yet, for a statewide toll of nearly 5,500, Gov. Andrew Cuomo said.

"A lot of pain again today for many New Yorkers," he said.

But in an encouraging sign, the governor said hospital admissions and the number of those receiving breathing tubes are dropping, indicating that social distancing measures are succeeding.

And alarming as the one-day increase in deaths might sound, the governor said that's a "lagging indicator," reflecting people who had been hospitalized before this week. Over the past several days, in fact, the number of deaths in New York appeared to be leveling off.

"You see that plateauing—that's because of what we are doing. If we don't do what we are doing, that is a much different curve," Cuomo said. "So social distancing is working."

Still, 6-foot (2-meter) social distancing has become impossible at times in the city's subway system.

With service drastically reduced, essential workers are encountering some busy trains as they head to their jobs. Photos taken in Brooklyn showed riders sitting or standing within inches of each other, some not wearing face masks.

Across the U.S., the death toll neared 13,000, with close to 400,000 confirmed infections. Some of the deadliest hot spots were Detroit, New Orleans and the New York metropolitan area, which includes parts of Long Island, New Jersey and Connecticut. New Jersey recorded over 1,200 dead, most of them in the northern counties where many residents commute into New York City.

In London, the 55-year-old Johnson was in stable condition and conscious at a hospital, where he was receiving oxygen but was not on a ventilator, officials said. Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab was designated to run the country in the meantime.

"For all of us in Cabinet, he is not just our boss. He's also a colleague, and he's also our friend," Raab said. "And I'm confident he'll pull through, because if there's one

thing I know about this prime minister, he's a fighter."

Deaths in Britain reached nearly 6,200, after a one-day increase of almost 800.

President Donald Trump trained his anger at the World Health Organization and threatened to freeze U.S. funding for it, saying the international group had "missed the call" on the pandemic and that it was "very China-centric."

Throughout his presidency, Trump has voiced skepticism toward many international organizations and has repeatedly heaped scorn on the WHO. In its most recent budget proposal in February, his administration called for slashing the U.S. contribution to the WHO from an estimated \$122.6 million to \$57.9 million.

Trump suggested the WHO had gone along with Beijing's efforts months ago to minimize the severity of the outbreak. The WHO has praised China for its transparency on the virus, even though some public health experts regard the country's figures with suspicion.

"They should have known and they probably did know," Trump said of WHO officials.

On Wall Street, a strong rally propelled by signs that the outbreak may be leveling off in some hard-hit parts of the world evaporated after the price of crude oil suddenly fell. Stocks ended the day slightly lower.

Elsewhere, Chinese authorities

ended the lockdown on Wuhan, and tens of thousands of residents traveled in and out of the sprawling industrial city. Residents must use a cellphone app showing that they are healthy and have not been in recent contact with anyone confirmed to have the virus.

China, which officially recorded more than 82,000 infections and over 3,300 deaths, reported 62 new cases—59 of them brought from outside the country—and two additional deaths Wednesday.

In Japan, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe declared a monthlong state of emergency in Tokyo and six other prefectures because of a spike of infections in the country with the

world's oldest population. The order will close night entertainment.

"My lifestyle will change. These are difficult times" said Yoshiyuki Kataoka, 44, a nightlife industry worker. "Maybe I'll become a recluse."

In some European hot spots, as in New York, authorities saw signs that the outbreak was turning a corner, based on slowdowns in new deaths and hospitalizations.

In Spain, new deaths Tuesday rose to 743 and infections climbed by 5,400 after five days of declines, but the increases were believed to reflect a weekend backlog. Authorities said they were confident in the downward trend.

TELESOURCE

From Page 1

with some issues within the facilities as required by the previous contract. The issues include improving the facilities and infrastructure and other enhancement programs.

Camacho said no additional costs for CUC is involved in the extension contract as the terms are the same as the previous contract.

Camacho said the Office of the Attorney General is their legal counsel and is part of the process.

He said it is critical and important

for CUC to require Telesource to perform and fund the requirements of the previous contract.

After two years, CUC will issue an invitation for bid for any companies interested to operate the power plant. He said CUC management is in discussion with the CUC board that the invitation for bid for vendors to operate the power plant will be for a 20-year contract.

Telesource's 20-megawatt diesel power plant generates an average of 1.9 megawatt per day.

Telesource's \$21.6-million-contract to build and operate the power plant started in 1997.

CURFEW

From Page 1

one can be home by 7pm. Three just got out of quarantine and all wanted the same things: a hot meal and people to talk to.

Sitting 6 feet apart from each other, everyone had questions and everyone had thoughts to share. "How was quarantine like?" "Was the food good?" "Did you have WiFi access?" etc.

It was not just the three who went through the 14-day mandatory quarantine that wanted to talk. Everyone in that get-together have been—each in their own way—in a state of isolation for some time now.

Landing from Tokyo eight hours after the mandatory quarantine for all people coming to the CNMI came out, Steve spent seven days at Kanoa Resort and seven days at Pacific Islands Club. "We got a certificate that we completed the quarantine. ... That was nice but the time there was more important. ... Saipan is a close-knit community so I think a lot of people like to socialize. They like to have meals together and all that but we are also a community that has a lot of sickness, old age, and these things don't go well with this virus," he said.

"I think if we all stay home and do our part for a little while, hopefully this [virus] can die down, especially that we have done away with the airline service. If we can all wait it out, then maybe, at some point, my hope is this will die down and we will have zero," he added.

The CNMI's tourism industry is right now at a standstill, with all China flights suspended since February,

followed by Korea flights in March and Star Marianas suspending inter-island flights last week and United Airlines also suspending all flights from Saipan to Guam from April 6 to April 30.

Greg, flying from Guam to Saipan on March 23, was one of the first people subjected to the 14-day mandatory quarantine. "Nobody said it was easy...but I agree with what they are doing because we do not have the capacity here. ... For 14 days I walked back and forth in the room all day. It was challenging psychologically because I couldn't leave but I also knew I was going to get out so that put things in proper perspective," he said.

"They called me Saturday and said that I was going to come out on Monday. On Monday, they called in the morning and asked me to have my stuff packed and I told them I packed the moment you told me I was going home," he grinned.

While in quarantine, Steve and Greg kept abreast of both local and international news. Having lived on Saipan for many years, they want this community to flourish and get beyond this challenging time.

What Steve missed most during quarantine was the social interaction. "I love hanging out with a lot of people. ... Saipan is one of the most beautiful outdoor activity places on the planet—golf, diving, mountain biking. So when that is taken away, you realize that your options are really limited and Saipan becomes much smaller," he said.

"The measures taken to stop the spread of COVID-19 is for everybody. We want to contain it, minimize it, and hopefully the people who are ill right now will recover and be

better. That's what we want, no more deaths," he added.

"Self-isolate, social distancing, and curfew hour—we need to do this so we can start moving the local economy because tourism is not going to be back for a long time. If we don't 'flatten the curve,' people are going to fail and starve," Greg said.

"We have to do this as quickly as we can and feel comfortable that there is no COVID-19 here. Personally, when that happens, I will go out and spend a lot of money in the restaurants," he added.

Mark pointed out that the current situation seems like "the first time where a normal Joe is more important than the CEO."

"The essential workers now are your electricians, plumbers, carpenters, grocery people who basically cannot make more than minimum wage. There was a time when people go up and asks, 'Why should you be paid a lot for flipping a burger?'" he said. "Now, those are the people who are keeping this island alive. We should open our eyes to 'It is not how little or a small job you have, it's all about the importance of that job,'" he added.

The conversation swirled and eddied and, as with conversation among friends, jumping from one topic to another, sharing information and thoughts about the coronavirus bill, home schooling, Federal Emergency Management Agency funding and assistance, the CARES Act, and how people's health and the CNMI economy are intertwined.

After sipping her wine and taking a last bite of the *nan* bread, Meg raised what was probably the most important issue of the night. "Guys, it is 6:30pm. Time to pack up."

POSITIVE

From Page 1

isolation areas to closely monitor individuals with symptoms..

The Governor's COVID-19 Task Force and CHCC also announced yesterday that they will begin to use the Diagnostic Laboratory Services in Honolulu, Hawaii for specimen testing of COVID-19, in addition to the Guam Public Health Laboratory.

In a live Facebook interview with Esther Muña, CHCC chief executive officer, through KUAM News, she said that isolation facilities are meant for individuals and immediate contacts who have shown symptoms and will be kept in mandatory quarantine until they are better. Quarantine facilities, on the other hand, are meant for the off-island travelers and/or returning residents, who have yet to show symptoms, that will undergo the 14-day mandatory that was ordered by Gov. Ralph DLG Torres.

Muna also stated that within the two designated facilities, CHCC has their medical teams stationed at each facility to assist the patients in isolation with treatment and patients in quarantine with monitoring their temperatures often to ensure that they don't spike up a fever, which is one of the symptoms for the virus.

As of 4:30pm, April 8, the CNMI has submitted 45 specimens for COVID-19 testing. A total of 37 out of 48 have already been positive, leaving the CNMI with 11 positive COVID-19 cases, 27 negative, one specimen for retesting, six pending specimens, and two deaths.

Parking at CHCC

CHCC is prohibiting all vehicles from parking at the upper level parking area of the hospital on Navy Hill,

where a 50-bed field hospital will be installed, with the help of the Commonwealth Utilities Corp., and other agencies.

The field hospital will be another platform that will be used as a preparedness and infection control measure in case the CNMI sees a spike of patients who have tested positive for COVID-19 cases and are in need of immediate isolation once the identified isolation facility is full.

Effective immediately, patients who are visiting the hospital or have appointments must park at the lower level parking areas or at the tennis courts at the corner of Navy Hill Road and Chalan Pale Arnold. This service does not affect the drive-thru pharmacy service on the lower level.

The Commonwealth Office of Transit Authority will be providing shuttles from the tennis court to the hospital. It is highly advisable that every passenger must wear a mask or something to cover the nose and mouth if they want to use the shuttle buses.

COVID-19 in Guam

The Department of Public Health and Social Services in Guam tested 32 more individuals for COVID-19 last April 7. Of those 32 tests, eight tested positive and 24 tested negative.

Of the 124 positive COVID-19 individuals in Guam, two were clinically diagnosed cases and 11 were confirmed positive by the Naval Health Research Center in San Diego, California, and one was confirmed positive case through Diagnostic Laboratory Services.

As of 3:30pm, Guam now has a total of 122 confirmed COVID-19 positives, two clinically diagnosed, 31 recoveries, and four deaths. According to the Joint Information Center in Guam, the numbers are subject to change with little to no notice.

Unemployment aid being readied for those who lost jobs

The CNMI Department of Labor is preparing to implement the Pandemic Unemployment Assistance program under the recently enacted Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act.

The new law, which President Donald J. Trump signed into law on March 27, 2020, includes the Relief for Workers Affected by Coronavirus Act that creates a new temporary federal program called Pandemic Unemployment Assistance.

On April 6, 2020, Assistant Secretary of Labor John Pallasch, along with the Employment and Training Administration, issued an advisory regarding the CARES Act, which details the PUA Pro-

gram's operating, financial and reporting instructions.

"Our government is working diligently through CNMI DOL to implement this program to provide relief for eligible private sector employees who have been laid off or terminated, as well as our government employees," said Gov. Ralph DLG Torres in a statement last Tuesday. "We continue to work with the U.S. Department of Labor on ensuring assistance for our government employees during these unprecedented times."

CNMI DOL has been preparing the operational procedures to address the safety of the staff and the public when the PUA application

PREPARE DOCS NOW

Those planning to apply for the PUA program should prepare these documents now:

- certification letter from their employer
- valid ID with photo
- passport
- copies of the latest paycheck stubs
- Social Security number

period opens.

"We are working from our homes by holding briefings and communicating with our federal counterparts to

complete the PUA application and implement the PUA program in the CNMI," said Labor Secretary Vicky Benavente. "We are aware that more than 4,000 private sector individuals have been laid off or terminated from their jobs, nearly 100 businesses have closed down, and government employees are set to be furloughed. There is no way of knowing when the CNMI economy will return to normal, judging from the scale of the number of COVID-19 cases worldwide."

CNMI DOL is recom-

mending that individuals who are planning to apply for the PUA program should prepare their documents ahead of time. Those include a certification letter from their employer, a valid ID with photo, passport, copies of the latest paycheck stubs, and Social Security number.

The certification letter must state the employee's name, title, wages, and schedule of the regular working hours, and the number of reduced hours, before the layoff or termination.

As soon as the eligibility

requirements, benefits, and other information applicable to the CNMI, is provided by the U.S. Department of Labor, CNMI DOL will issue an announcement regarding the date, time, location, telephone numbers, and email addresses for the submission of a PUA application.

The CNMI DOL offices, like most of the government offices located on Capital Hill, have been closed as part of the COVID-19 response. These offices will remain closed until further notice on the PUA application. **(PR)**

Medicaid installs new drop box for applicants

The CNMI State Medicaid Agency has installed a new drop box as a way for applicants to submit their applications and supporting documents during the global pandemic.

New and returning applicants can pick up all application forms right next to the drop box located at the Medicaid office on Capital Hill or forms can be downloaded via the Medicaid website at <http://medicaid.cnmi.mp/index.php/sma-services/medicaid-application-forms>.

All application and renewal/redetermination forms submitted must be original. Supporting documents may be submitted via fax at (670) 664-4885, email, or via the drop box with copies attached to application forms. Note that Medicaid staff will not be making any copies for clients at this time.

In addition, be sure that all mailing addresses and contact numbers are up to date to en-

sure that cards are sent to the correct addresses and in the event that case workers need to contact any beneficiaries.

The CNMI State Medicaid Agency will be practicing social distancing at their Capital Hill office. Applicants and beneficiaries will be advised to stay at least 6 feet apart from one another in waiting areas.

Medicaid eligibility staff members are available to answer questions via email at:

■ Rosita Benito: rositabenito@cnmimedicaid.com

■ Ruth Pangelinan: ruthpangelinan@cnmimedicaid.com

■ Soledad Cabrera: soledadcabrera@cnmimedicaid.com

■ Rita Camacho: ritacamacho@cnmimedicaid.com

For more information, contact the CNMI State Medicaid Agency office at (670) 664-4880 or 664-4882. They will be receiving calls from Tuesday to Thursday, 8am-12pm. **(PR)**

Order mandates e-filing of all court cases

The CNMI Supreme Court issued an order on April 6, 2020, mandating that all documents filed in criminal, civil, traffic and small claims cases be filed and served electronically. The Judiciary initially began accepting electronic filing in 2006 in limited civil actions.

Attorneys and self-represented litigants can now file documents electronically using File & ServeXpress portal at <https://www.fileandservexpress.com/>. According to File & ServeXpress website, electronic file users "gain a global overview and fast access to all cases in one spot" and are able to "respond quickly and effortlessly to any changes pertinent to a case."

The pressing situation surrounding COVID-19 prompted an increased need for ac-

tivating electronic filing and service for all case types. File & ServeXpress responded quickly to the needs of the CNMI Judiciary. In collaboration with Clerk of the Superior Court Patrick V. Diaz, File & ServeXpress was able to initiate electronic filing and service for all case types in one week.

"This will effectively streamline the filing of cases in the courts. We are excited and thankful to File and Serve for their expeditious assistance in triggering electronic filing and service for all case types," said Supreme Court Clerk of Court Gretchen S. Smith. "The challenges in view of COVID-19 is unprecedented, but the Judiciary is doing its best to accommodate the needs of litigants and the public." **(PR)**



NO INTERISLAND TRAVEL

The commuter terminal at the Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport remains shuttered as Star Marianas Air, the only airline serving interisland travel in the CNMI, has suspended its operation until further notice.

KRIZEL TUASON

THINGS TO KNOW

As of April 8, 2020. All information may change without prior notice. For corrections and additions to this list, send an email to editor@saipantribune.com or chevy_alipio@saipantribune.com, or call 235-6397 or 235-2440.

POLICIES

- Curfew from 7pm to 6am for everyone (adults and minors)
- Public beaches and pathways open from 6am to 6pm for individual use for exercise and shoreline subsistence fishing. Individuals must still practice social distancing.
- All boat ramps and docks are opened. Boaters must stop fishing activities and dock their vessels before the 7pm curfew.

QUARANTINE UPDATE

- The first group will be released from COVID-19 quarantine facility this week. See link at www.saipantribune.com.

WHO UPDATE

- Advice on the use of masks in the context of COVID-19. See link at www.saipantribune.com.

BANK HOURS

- Bank of Hawaii: Monday to Friday - 9am to 1pm (Saturdays closed)
- Bank of Guam Chalan Kanoa: Closed temporarily
- Bank of Guam Garapan: Monday to Friday-9am-4pm; Saturday 9am-1pm
- First Hawaiian Bank Oleai: Monday to Friday-9am-1pm; Saturday closed
- First Hawaiian Bank Gualo Rai: Monday to Friday-9am-1pm; Saturday closed

U.S. POSTAL SERVICE

- USPS Chalan Kanoa: Monday to Friday - 8:30am-4pm; Sat 9am-12pm
- USPS San Vicente: Monday to Friday - 12pm-5:30pm; Sat 12pm-3pm

SUPERMARKETS

- For a list of the status of open and closed stores and those with limited hours, go to https://docs.google.com/document/d/1fyRm2XtrPg7hQ_XN_YbesQYP6lxVwghB_xAXRz44xl/edit

RESTAURANTS

- For a list of the status of open and closed restaurants and those with limited hours, go to https://docs.google.com/document/d/1O8TVIlgVGM-vXAT5a_o0Eac3ftfLTjL2AV4i-Pem0Zqdo/edit

OTHER BUSINESS:

- For a list of their status, go to <https://docs.google.com/document/d/15zg5hv22fhoKWOLQgasVb-bdioeJrpD5FjhdzgiBoW0/edit>

MEDICAL SERVICES

- For a list of the status of open and closed medical services and those with limited hours, go to <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1OGsdjdlau3mY8HABuqkiolTq0j9Zr7L48FmPydD8htU/edit>

HOTELS

- For a partial list of the status of open and closed hotels and those with limited hours, go to https://docs.google.com/document/d/1O9fTmFzIsI-zev7M6YbPS_xHiq4vNxxUKlh0v42GkE/edit

RESOURCES

- Demystifying the CARES ACT: A primer for businesses. Plus Saipan Chamber of Commerce updates. See <https://myemail.constantcontact.com/De-mystifying-the-CARES-ACT-and-Local-Updates.html?soid=1129193858340&aid=0EXsNhZzzis>
- Commonwealth Health Care Corp. services. See link at www.saipantribune.com.
- Frequently-asked-questions about direct assistance under CARES Act. See link at www.saipantribune.com.
- Face masks and do-it-yourself facial coverings. See link at www.saipantribune.com.
- Needing mental health tips? See link at www.saipantribune.com.
- Announcement about re-opening of boat ramps and docks. See link at www.saipantribune.com.
- Announcement about re-opening of public beaches and pathways. See link at www.saipantribune.com.
- Avoid COVID-19 scams: Attorney General Edward Manibusan issues alert of coronavirus disease (COVID-19) scams. See link at www.saipantribune.com.

Settlement Fund office hours

The Settlement Fund office has reduced its service hours to half day. We are still restricting access to the public and will continue to receive and respond to inquiries by phone, fax and email *only* from 8am to 1pm, Monday-Friday. Fund staff will be available to assist members only by telephone, fax, or email. Contact Information for the Settlement Fund: tel: (670) 322-3863; fax: (670) 664-8080; email: info@nmisf.com. **(PR)**

Source: Compiled by Saipan Tribune/ Chevy Alipio

Lions Clubs donate grocery vouchers to 30 CNMI families

By JUSTINE NAUTA
justine_nauta@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

With many people in the CNMI either jobless or furloughed due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the many clubs that comprise the Lions Clubs International District 204, Region 2 recently came together to give 30 families in the CNMI vouchers that they could use to buy food, goods.

Each of the recipient family got \$35 worth of vouchers each.

According to Mario Mayuga, Region 2 Marketing and Communications chair, the beneficiary families could use these vouchers buy food and other necessities.

While handing out the vouchers, club members were reminded to follow social distancing guidelines—keeping a two-meter distance—and avoiding direct contact, in order to minimize any possible spread of the coronavirus.

According to Mayuga, these vouchers will allow the recipients to shop on their own while also giving them a green light to select the items they need instead of the club members picking out what they think the recipients need. Mayuga credits Annamae Adaza, Region chairwoman, for coming up with the idea for this kind of assistance.

“Seeing the smile in all our recipients was so rewarding, and we are praying that this global crisis will be over soon,” said Al Cabael, Zone 1 chairman.

Argie Buensalido, Zone 2 chairman, said that being able to extend assistance, in one way or another, is a great



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

The 30 CNMI families who benefited from the \$35 voucher for goods donated by the Lions Clubs International District 204, Region 2 took a picture of themselves with a sign showing their appreciation for the donation that helped them buy frozen and canned foods, hygiene products, and snacks.

way to help each other during these times.

The Lions Clubs members acknowledged Bhiya Canadalla of Happy Market in As Lito and Mildred Pabilando of LN Market in Chalan Kanoa for their assistance with this project.

“The Saipan Lions would also like to extend their gratitude to Guahan Lions Club for the ad-

ditional funding that helped 10 more families,” said Adaza.

This isn’t the first time that the Lions Clubs offered their assistance during trying times. In 2018, after Super Typhoon Yutu, the clubs’ members in the CNMI also donated relief goods to Tinian residents. On Nov. 22, 2018, they donated 10-lb sacks of rice to 515 individuals.

Flashback

A LOOK BACK AT PAST YEARS' HEADLINES

April 9, 2001

CNMI to get millions more for tobacco-related illnesses

All tobacco manufacturers will be required to deposit substantial amount of money to a proposed trust fund which will finance future cigarette-related medical services that may be needed by CNMI smokers. The Senate on Friday passed legislation that will require even those who are non-participants to the Master Tobacco Settlement Agreement to deposit money into the to-be established escrow fund. Under the proposed measure, all tobacco manufacturers whose products are being sold in the Northern Marianas market will be forced to participate in the Master Settlement Agreement.

LibDay losses annoy lawmakers

The Legislature ordered the Liberation Day Committee to submit a full accounting report of revenues, including total expenditure of programs and activities for the July 4th celebration. The Legislature said it will grant the \$70,000 appropriations requested by the Liberation Day Committee provided it is able to completely account for all the expenses incurred in the past July 4 celebrations. However, legislators were initially apprehensive whether or not to grant the Committee’s funding

request because of the consistent deficit suffered by the July 4 celebration body since 1994.

April 9, 2001

Suspect escapes custody

A Chinese male who was being detained for alleged loan sharking escaped from the Department of Corrections early yesterday morning while recovering from surgery at the Commonwealth Health Center, authorities said. The Department of Public Safety, together with the Federal Bureau of Investigation, have already launched a manhunt for the fugitive. DPS spokesman Eric David said that Chen Li Wu, who is in his 30s slipped early in the morning from the hospital. He said that Immigration Detention officers had escorted Chen to the hospital for minor surgery. He declined to specify the nature of Chen’s medical operation. It was while Chen was recovering from the surgery when he escaped. David said more details of the incident will be released on Monday.

Enola Gay crew expected back this August

The island of Tinian will be hosting this August the 60th anniversary of the atomic missions to Hiroshima and Nagasaki, during which over 100 U.S. World War II veterans and Japanese veterans are expected to visit the island 60 years after the fateful missions to Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The commemorative event will be held from Aug. 2 to Aug. 10, 2005. The highlight of the events will be the return of the *Enola Gay* crew—pilot, General Tibbets, navigator, Dutch Van Kirk and weaponeer Morris Jeppson, according to Phillip T. Mendiola-Long, chair of the 60th anniversary committee

and Special Assistant for Policy and Research for the Tinian and Aguiguan Mayor’s Office. Tibbets, Van Kirk, and Jeppson were also present during the 60th anniversary of the Battles of Saipan and Tinian that was held in the CNMI June of last year.

April 9, 2008

Villagomez vetoes austerity bill

Acting Gov. Timothy P. Villagomez has vetoed an austerity bill originally backed by the administration, saying that Legislature-added provisions set the bill off course from the main intent. “The primary focus of the administration with respect to this legislation would have been to save a few hundred employees who are facing loss of jobs, while continuing to provide essential services to the community and assisting the government from any further financial burden. However, the focus has been frustrated by certain provisions of the measure,” Villagomez said.

‘2008 aviation workshop a success’

No less than the regional head of the Federal Aviation Administration said that the recently concluded 2008 Pacific Aviation Directors Workshop held on Saipan last week was a great success. “I received a significant amount of very positive feedback from many of the participants, and I’m very pleased to be able to state that it was a huge success,” said FAA program manager for the Micronesia Barry Brayer in an e-mail to the Saipan Tribune. The FAA official also said that he was happy that the event was able to cover a lot of topics and achieved a lot in terms of networking during the three-day event.

Navy boss resigns amid uproar over firing of ship captain

By LOLITA C. BALDOR and
ROBERT BURNS
ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON (AP)—Acting Navy Secretary Thomas Modly resigned Tuesday, bringing to a climax an extraordinary drama that he advanced by delivering a profanity-laced upbraiding of the officer he fired as captain of the coronavirus-stricken USS *Theodore Roosevelt*.



Modly

In announcing the resignation, Defense Secretary Mark Esper said Modly quit on his own accord, “putting the Navy and the sailors above self,” so the Navy and the *Roosevelt* can move forward. The *Roosevelt* is sidelined in port at Guam as members of the crew are tested for the coronavirus and moved ashore.

“His care for the sailors was genuine,” Esper said.

Esper said he briefed President Donald Trump on his conversation with Modly, and with the president’s approval he is appointing James McPherson as acting Navy secretary. McPherson, a Navy veteran, is currently serving as undersecretary of the Army. He was confirmed in that position by the Senate last month.

Esper called McPherson a “smart, capable and professional leader who will restore confidence and stability in the Navy during these challenging times.”

Esper said he also met with Navy leaders and emphasized three priorities, including putting the health, safety and welfare of the *Roosevelt* crew first, and working to get the ship back out to sea as soon as safely possible.

Modly had created a combustible controversy by firing the *Roosevelt*’s skipper, Capt. Brett E. Crozier, last week, saying Crozier had shown “extremely poor judgment” in widely distributing by email a letter calling for urgent help with the COVID-19 outbreak aboard his ship.

Modly then flew to the ship, at port in Guam, and delivered a speech to the crew Sunday in which he lambasted Crozier, saying he was either “too naive or too stupid” to be in charge of an aircraft carrier.

According to a senior defense official, Esper spoke to Modly Monday evening, directing him to apologize for his remarks about Crozier and setting a phone meeting for Tuesday morning. The official said Esper did not request or demand Modly’s resignation, but instead discussed the situation and the way forward. The officials spoke on the condi-

tion of anonymity to discuss private conversations.

Modly came to his own conclusion and offered his resignation. Modly’s options were few. Officials said it would have been difficult for him to rebuild his relationship with sailors in the fleet, and equally hard to restore his reputation among senior military leaders and retired naval officers who believed his sharp remarks on the *Roosevelt* crossed a line.

Asked about the resignation, Trump said Tuesday that he didn’t know him or speak to him but credited Modly for resigning “to end that problem.” It was, he said, an “unselfish thing to do.”

By the time Modly issued his public apology Monday night, the calls among Democrats in Congress for his resignation were mounting. On Tuesday morning, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi said Modly must go.

“Sadly, Acting Secretary Modly’s actions and words demonstrate his failure to prioritize the force protection of our troops,” Pelosi, D-Calif., said in a written statement. “He showed a serious lack of the sound judgment and strong leadership needed during this time. Acting Secretary Modly must be removed from his position or resign.”

Sen. Jack Reed, the top Democrat on the Senate Armed Services Committee, said Modly had fired Crozier against the advice of Navy military leaders.

“The new leadership of the Navy must do better in leading and protecting sailors, Marines and their families in this unprecedented crisis,” Reed said.

As of Tuesday, the Navy said 79% of the *Roosevelt* crew had been tested for the coronavirus, and 230 of them were positive. About 2,000 of the 4,865 crew members had been taken off the ship.

The episode began when the *Roosevelt* reported its first COVID-19 case among the crew on March 22, two weeks after making a port visit in Vietnam. The outbreak has sidelined the warship indefinitely and created conflict at the highest levels of the Pentagon.

Esper had publicly expressed his support for Modly’s decision to fire Crozier, but after Modly’s speech aboard the ship, Esper grew unsettled. Just hours after Modly issued a statement Monday defending his words, Esper compelled Modly to reverse course and issue a pub-

lic apology.

“I want to apologize for any confusion this choice of words may have caused,” he wrote, referring to his speech aboard the *Roosevelt*. “I also want to apologize directly to Captain Crozier, his family, and the entire crew of the Theodore Roosevelt for any pain my remarks may have caused.”

Trump told reporters at the White House on Monday that he might get involved, agreeing that Modly’s criticism of Crozier was “a rough state-

ment.” He said Crozier made a mistake when he sent a memo to several people laying out his concerns about the crew and the virus. In the memo, which was leaked to the media, Crozier said: “We are not at war. Sailors do not need to die.”

Trump said Crozier had a good career prior to this incident, adding, “I don’t want to destroy somebody for having a bad day.”

Modly, in his apology, reframed his earlier remarks that Crozier was “too naive or too

stupid” to command. Instead, he said he believes Crozier is “smart and passionate.”

“I believe, precisely because he is not naive and stupid, that he sent his alarming email with the intention of getting it into the public domain in an effort to draw public attention to the situation on his ship,” Modly wrote.

Aboard the ship, Modly had urged the crew to stop complaining.

“It is the mission of the ship that matters,” he said. “You

all know this, but in my view your Captain lost sight of this and he compromised critical information about your status intentionally to draw greater attention to your situation.”

Modly, a 1983 Naval Academy graduate, became the acting Navy secretary last November after Richard Spencer was ousted from the position. Trump last month nominated retired Rear Adm. Kenneth Braithwaite, the current ambassador to Norway, to be the next Navy secretary.

Guam soldiers return home from 10-month deployment



A soldier, at center, from the Guam Army National Guard’s 1st-294th Infantry Regiment, is screened by GUARNG medics at the Guard’s Readiness Center, in Barrigada, shortly after arriving in Guam, from a 10-month deployment to Egypt, where he was part of a Multinational Force Observers peacekeeping mission.

PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE/GUAM NATIONAL GUARD

Soldiers from the Guam Army National Guard’s 1st-294th Infantry Regiment arrived in Guam last Sunday after a 10-month deployment to Egypt.

The soldiers were part of the Multinational Force and Observers, or MFO, Team, consisting of about 12 countries, who supervise the implementation of the security provisions of the 1979 Egyptian-Israeli Treaty of Peace and prevent any violation of its terms.

The soldiers had just come from Fort Bliss, in El Paso, Texas, where they were quarantined for 14 days, in accordance with federal guidelines, before completing

post-mobilization requirements, which included additional medical screening, and returning home to Guam.

The soldiers were aboard a contracted military transport aircraft that landed at Andersen Air Force Base in Yigo, Guam, where they were met by Maj. Gen. Esther J.C. Aguigui, The Adjutant General, Guam National Guard, and the Guard’s command team.

U.S. Air Force public health officials screened the soldiers before they deplaned and boarded buses en route to the Guard’s Readiness Center in Barrigada. The soldiers were screened by Guam National Guard medical personnel once again and had

their temperatures taken and Guam Customs and Quarantine officers inspected their bags before they were cleared to leave. Family members waited patiently outside for their soldier to exit their assigned buildings in order to

welcome them home.

The soldiers were released and given a stay-at-home as well as a restriction of movement order to comply with current island policies and to help fight the current battle against coronavirus. (PR)



Soldiers from the Guam Army National Guard’s 1st-294th Infantry Regiment arrive at Andersen Air Force Base, Yigo, Guam, from a 10-month deployment to Egypt. They were greeted by Maj. Gen. Esther J.C. Aguigui, The Adjutant General, Guam National Guard, and her command team

PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE/GUAM NATIONAL GUARD

Opinion

Hafa Adai!

Saipan Tribune

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EDITORIAL

Is hydroxychloroquine a 'game changer?' We can hope

President Donald Trump needs to leave medical treatment and advice to the nation's doctors. Wielding the bully pulpit as he did over the weekend to promote hydroxychloroquine as a breakthrough COVID-19 drug is premature and potentially harmful.

This is not a medication for Americans to take on their own or insist upon over all other drugs should they become ill with this mysterious new virus. Political pronouncements are not a substitute for medical expertise.

Sold under the name Plaquenil, hydroxychloroquine is in the spotlight because there is no medication approved through regular channels to treat COVID-19. Doctors are rifling through the existing pharmaceutical toolbox to find something that may help.

Hydroxychloroquine is one drug that's under consideration. It's been used since the 1950s to treat lupus and is also a malaria preventive. But it's not the only candidate that may hold promise.

Remdesivir, an antiviral developed to treat Ebola, was used successfully to treat one of the first Americans infected with COVID-19. Losartan, a hypertension medication that may block the COVID-19 virus from entering human cells, could also have benefits.

At this point, it's too soon to call any of these drugs a "game changer," Dr. Tim Schacker of the University of Minnesota told an editorial writer in a recent interview.

Large clinical trials are underway here and elsewhere to determine what works best. That means doctors are providing cutting-edge treatments to those who become ill and swiftly analyzing results. This work is accelerated, but it's not clear if one drug works or if it's better than others.

The small studies of hydroxychloroquine that have been done so far are not a replacement for rigorous trials at academic medical centers like the University of Minnesota. That the results from this early, limited research on hydroxychloroquine are mixed underscores the need to scale-up scientific scrutiny.

One recent study involved 30 patients in China. The report, published by the Journal of Zhejiang University, was released last month. Hydroxychloroquine was given to patients who became ill with COVID-19. "Patients who got the medicine didn't fight off the new coronavirus more often than those who did not get the medicine," according to a Bloomberg story.

A different study done in France did report a benefit from treating an even smaller number of COVID-19 patients with hydroxychloroquine and azithromycin, a drug that fights bacteria, not viruses. This study has proved controversial, with critics contending that the sickest patients were left out of the analysis (which would skew the results). And, that the statistical methods used to analyze the data were not the ones that would typically be used in this kind of study.

Trump's promotion may have unfortunately inspired some Americans to try buying hydroxychloroquine without a doctor's prescription. A recent story in the Dallas Morning News said some people are crossing the southern border to buy it.

This is not a drug to take outside a doctor's supervision. Hydroxychloroquine has what is known as a "narrow therapeutic window," meaning there's not much room between helpful and harmful doses. In addition, it can cause potentially fatal heart rhythm abnormalities. This is not a new

See **GAME CHANGER** on next page



Millions need unemployment benefits. Unfortunately, the delivery system is broken

More than 10 million Americans filed for unemployment insurance in March as businesses shut their doors in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The stay-at-home orders now covering most of the country could, economists project, idle 20% or more of the workforce in the weeks ahead.

Washington responded to this catastrophe with a \$2-trillion stimulus package that included expanding unemployment benefits. The problem is, the antiquated unemployment insurance program is full of gaps and rules that could still leave unemployed people out in the cold.

In normal times, only about 28% of unemployed Americans receive unemployment benefits—either because they quit their job (and aren't eligible) or they don't apply. That rate ticks up during recessions, when more eligible, laid-off workers apply. Yet only about 40% got benefits at the peak of the 2008-09 recession.

The new stimulus package expands unemployment insurance to cover workers not normally eligible, such as gig workers and freelancers, as well as individuals who are not able to work due to COVID-19. It provides an additional \$600 a week for four months to supplement state unemployment checks and extends the duration of benefits by 13 weeks from the typical 26 weeks.

These are welcome measures to tide people over, but they're temporary fixes that don't address the structural problems that will continue to plague unemployment benefit programs after the infusion of cash runs out.

Unemployment insurance is funded by each state through employer taxes that are set aside in a trust fund. Workers are eligible for benefits only if they meet minimum requirements for length of employment and earnings, lost their job through no fault of their own (they didn't quit or get fired for cause) and are currently looking for work. An eligible worker can receive checks for up to half their former wages for as long as 26 weeks, paid out from the trust fund.

This sounds straightforward enough. But in fact, states and employers have incentive to prevent laid-off workers from receiving unemployment benefits. The tax on employers is paid on each worker. The tax is also "experience rated," meaning that a company with a lot of layoffs ends up paying a higher tax to cover its remaining employees. And if a lot of workers in a state seek unemployment insurance all at once, and the trust fund runs dry, then taxes on all employers can increase during a recession—clearly a bad outcome.

While the stimulus package increases benefits, it left many crucial questions about eligibility—which are determined by the states—unanswered. For example, can workers who have to drop

By **KATHRYN A. EDWARDS**
Los Angeles Times

Kathryn A. Edwards is an associate economist at the nonprofit, nonpartisan Rand Corp. Her research focuses on education, labor and unemployment.



down to part time to take care of children whose schools have closed receive benefits? If a worker is sick but can't get tested to confirm the illness is COVID-19, would that person receive benefits? States are likely to answer differently, resulting in very different access to, or levels of, benefits depending on where you live.

It's already clear that these state programs are unprepared to process benefit claims from the huge flood of workers now affected by coronavirus-related shutdowns. Websites for applications crashed in several states, including Michigan, Florida, Ohio, New York, New Jersey and Washington, D.C.

This current crisis will force state administrators to update their systems simply to get the money through the pipeline. But it should spur state and federal leaders to move toward comprehensive reforms that would benefit both workers and businesses.

At a minimum, the program needs to be federalized into a single unemployment system. This would remove the state variations in eligibility and benefits, stop penalizing workers who move across states and end the race to the bottom among states to have lower tax rates.

Bold reform would include broader use of "work-sharing" assistance. Under this concept, businesses struggling financially can apply for assistance from the unemployment trust fund to temporarily cover a portion of payroll costs.

Evidence from the few firms in the U.S. that use it show that this approach is both effective in preventing layoffs and popular among employers. (If a business closes or carries out layoffs, then workers get the jobless benefits directly.) At the moment, only 28 states have any type of work-sharing program.

Since its creation in 1935, unemployment insurance has been neglected to the point of obsolescence. There has been no federal reform of the program since 1976, most unemployed people do not receive benefits, the generosity of benefits has eroded over time and trust funds have not kept up with need.

The COVID-19 pandemic shows why it's crucial to strengthen this program so it can help businesses and workers ride out economic shocks beyond their control.

EDITORIAL POLICY

Letters to the editor must include the NAME, VILLAGE ADDRESS, and CONTACT NUMBER of the contributor. Letters that do not have these information will immediately be trashed. Contributions consisting of 500 words or less have more chances of getting published. The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to publish a contribution or not; the right to edit submissions for length, accuracy, and clarity; and the right to publish and distribute contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats. Submissions may be sent via snail mail to the 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, 96950; fax (670) 235-3740; e-mail to editor@saipantribune.com; or through our website at www.saipantribune.com.

Message to government retirees and PSS

Hafa adai and tirow, greetings to the great people of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, all our retirees, and to the PSS family.

Yesterday I wrote a letter to the retirees explaining exactly what has transpired that made me make a very critical decision to suspend or cease the retiree's 25% from the government.

Three board members—Philip Long, Marylou Ada and Andrew Orsini—filed an injunction to ask the court that the government shall pay 25% of the total revenue, despite numerous pleas, basically begging them not to file the injunction while we're experiencing COVID-19, our tourist numbers going down, and the fact that we've always worked well with [Board of Education] chairperson Janice Tenorio, vice chair Sgt. Major Herman Atalig, and Education Commissioner Dr. Alfred Ada.

We continued to have a strong communication and we continued to give our appropriated amount to PSS. We have never been short and we have always made sure to take care of what the Legislature has appropriated for PSS.

Since I got on board as a lieutenant governor and your governor, not a single year have I ever cut PSS short on what was appropriated by the Legislature.

We all met as a leadership, PSS board, the PSS attorney, the Legislature speaker, their attorney, Senate president, our attorneys, and the Attorney General and we all had an agreement that whatever the actual collection was, that I would continue to give PSS their 25%.

We all agreed and a week later, the three board members—

again, Philip Long, Marylou Ada and Andrew Orsini—decided to go ahead and file the injunction after numerous pleas to please not file the injunction because it would definitely jeopardize our retirees' 25%.

While we agreed that we are going to address the court opinion for fiscal year 2021, they still decided to go ahead and file the injunction.

With that said, what they are requiring is I pay PSS 25% of the \$43 million that the government has to pay the Settlement Fund; \$43 million times 25% is roughly \$10.7 million.

The government pays retirees roughly \$14 million every year and they want to tack 25% on top of that. Again roughly \$3 million, that equates to \$14 million.

So I have a choice at this point, give PSS \$14 million based on what the three board members want, or give the retirees \$14 million. I have no choice at this point.

But I am here again pleading with the three board members. If you drop the injunction, I will be able to pay our retirees their 25% for the remaining of the year as well as next year.

They can blame me, they can blame anything they want, even some of the community, or some of legislators, but I have never, not once, cut short the retirees' pension and in fact, I have given them a couple of bonuses and I have never shortened our government's transfer to PSS on what the Legislature has appropriated.

So, today, I ask again that, if they, the three board members, drop the injunction I will be able to pay the retirees 25%.

To everyone that's listening I will again be clear, I've always been supportive of PSS, teachers, counselors, principals, bus

By **RALPH DLG TORRES**

Special to the Saipan Tribune

Ralph DLG Torres is governor of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.



drivers and that's why I have never cut short what was appropriated by the Legislature.

Even when the deficit was up, I still never cut PSS.

If you look at the chart that I provided, it shows what was appropriated and what was transferred.

To chair Janice Tenorio, vice chair Sgt. Major Herman Atalig, and PSS Commissioner Dr. Alfred Ada, I thank you for protecting both PSS and our retirees.

When I say PSS, you continue to ask please transfer this for our teachers, our principal and for our students. I have always worked with you and I am saddened that it took the three board members to make this decision despite both of you board members pleading as well.

I apologize and I thank you for your support. For supporting our PSS family and as well as understanding what it takes to preserve the payment and the pension of our retirees. Thank you for your partnership.

Overlooked medical history: 2 women who developed antiserum that saved children from 'death sentence'

Here's a lost piece of history from the world of medical science: Two women, born in Baltimore a decade apart in the early 20th century, survived the pandemic of 1918-1919, became researchers in a field dominated by men and saved countless children from a lethal disease.

There are no hometown memorials for either Dr. Hattie Alexander (born April 1901) or her partner in research, Grace Leidy (born October 1910), so I thought I'd create one with this column. Attention must be paid to these pioneers, and better late than never.

The men and women now scrambling in labs to save us from coronavirus build on generations of work by their ancestors in lab coats—some of them famous, many not so. When Hattie Alexander died in 1968, her obituary ran only nine paragraphs in the New York Times, 10 in the Baltimore Sun, though both described her as internationally recognized for having developed the first effective treatment for influenzal meningitis.

Until that time—the 1930s and early 1940s—that form of meningitis was almost always fatal to babies and children. This was before vaccines, before effective antibiotics. Alexander and Leidy's treatment turned "pediatric bacterial meningitis from a certain death sentence into a condition with an 80% recovery rate," according to a history from Columbia University's hospital and medical school, where Dr. Alexander served as a pediatrician and professor.

Alexander and Leidy developed an antiserum, a treatment similar to the one researchers at Johns Hopkins and other institutions are working on now in the hopes of preventing the spread of coronavirus.

The concept is a fairly old one: Draw blood from patients who survive an infection and use it to prevent others, particularly our front-line nurses and physicians, from getting it. Survivors of infection produce antibodies that fight further infections. The idea is to share this new immunity by giving a transfusion to someone at risk. Hopkins just received \$3 million from Bloomberg Philanthropies, \$1 million from the state of Maryland and approval of the Food and Drug Administration to continue testing a

therapy that uses blood plasma from people who have recovered from COVID-19.

While it's not considered a long-term solution, this old-school method might do a lot of good until a vaccine becomes available.

Back to Alexander and Leidy.

In the late 1930s, at Columbia-Presbyterian Medical Center in New York, their work concentrated on infections in children, and specifically bacterial meningitis. Alexander and Leidy used an antiserum developed in inoculated rabbits to save children who had contracted Haemophilus influenzae, the cause of bacterial meningitis.

The antiserum Alexander developed was in time surpassed by antibiotics and, later, a vaccine, but for several years theirs was the most effective treatment, and in time childhood mortality from influenzal meningitis was practically eliminated.

Alexander and Leidy continued their research, going deep into bacterial genetics.

From the Columbia history: "As signs emerged that overuse could weaken the effect of antibiotics, Dr. Alexander and her research associate, Grace Leidy, demonstrated the role of genetic mutation in antibiotic resistance and turned their attention to analyses of DNA in H. influenza and, later, polio, tuberculosis and other infectious diseases."

Where did these pioneers come from?

They came from Baltimore, though Sun librarian Paul McCordell and I were able to learn more about the doctor than her research associate.

Grace Leidy grew up in the city and, while the high school someone went to is a hugely important thing to know in Baltimore—sorry, we don't know the one she attended.

However, we know that Leidy went to Hunter College, graduating in 1932 with a degree in biology. She then earned a master's from Columbia and went to work in the hospital's pathology lab. She had a long career fighting infections in children. She died in Pennsylvania in 2003 at the age of 92.

Hattie Alexander was from a family of eight children. She

use potentially expanding.

Sequestering the drug for COVID-19 treatment may also lead to shortages for patients who take it for lupus and other conditions.

We hope Trump is proven right about hydroxychloroquine.

By **DAN RODRICKS**

The Baltimore Sun

Dan Rodricks is a long-time columnist for the Baltimore Sun.



attended Baltimore schools and Goucher College, graduating with a bachelor's degree in 1923. It was the progressive era in America, and public health had become a priority. Alexander got a job as a bacteriologist with the U.S. Public Health Service in Washington. She also worked in the lab for what was then the Maryland Public Health Service.

That experience apparently helped her get into medical school at Johns Hopkins. By 1930, she had earned a medical degree, with a focus on pediatrics. She worked at Hopkins Hospital for a year before taking a job at Columbia and spent the rest of her life there as a professor and researcher. She was one of the first women to head a medical society, becoming president of the American Pediatric Society in 1964.

While Alexander and Leidy were both from Baltimore, it's not known if the women knew each other while they lived here.

Hattie Alexander died of cancer in New York in 1968 at age 67. At the time of her death, a colleague at Columbia called her a "creative scientist, compassionate physician, perceptive teacher, and seeker of truth—tough-minded and gentle, inquisitive, industrious, kind, determined, stubbornly tenacious ..."

And good thing, too. There are men and women, born in the 1940s, who never heard of Hattie Alexander, and yet probably owe their lives to her truth-seeking, her stubborn tenaciousness. Those are vital traits in the men and women in lab coats, and key to the medical breakthroughs that save us all.

But the responsibility for determining which drug, if any, is game changing treatment lies with the nation's doctors and scientists. Let their work, not political wishful thinking, guide the battle against the coronavirus.

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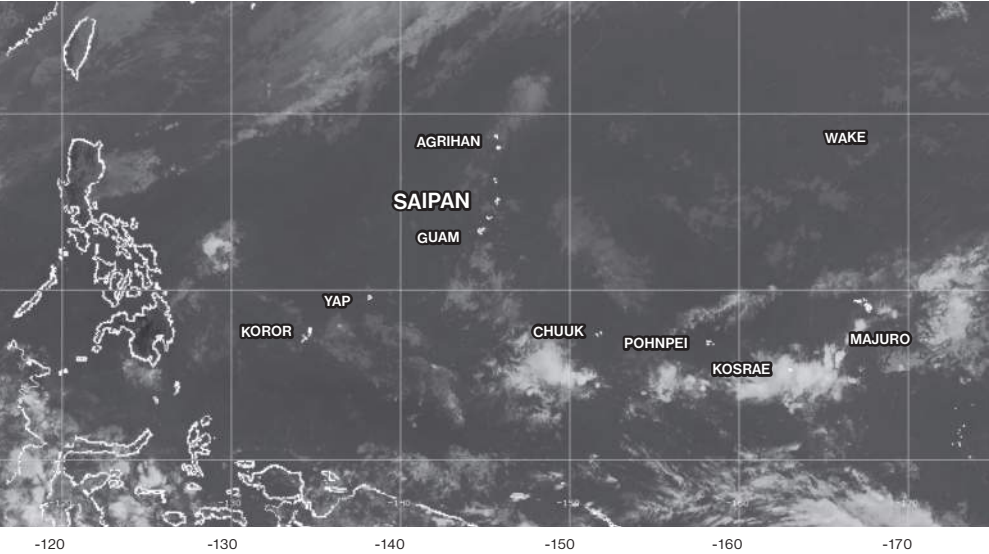
GAME CHANGER

From Page 8

concern but one that should be front of mind with the drug's

The Weather

5-DAY FORECAST FOR SAIPAN AND TINIAN									
TODAY		FRIDAY		SATURDAY		SUNDAY		MONDAY	
Partly sunny with isolated showers. East winds 15 to 20 mph.		Mostly cloudy. Isolated showers. East winds 5 to 15 mph.		Partly cloudy with isolated showers.		Partly cloudy with isolated showers.		Partly cloudy with isolated showers.	
88°	77°	87°	76°	87°	77°	88°	77°	88°	77°
YESTERDAY'S SATELLITE IMAGE									



PICTURE TIME: 7:44 AM, WEDNESDAY, APRIL 8, 2020
Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

Satellite shows a disturbance bringing increased cloudiness to the Marianas, especially north of Saipan. So far there do not seem to be many showers, as all the cloud top temperatures are above freezing. The buoys reveal combined seas of 4 to 6 feet, composed mainly of a 2 to 3 foot north swell and a mix of east trade-wind waves and swell.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

MICRONESIA			▲ ▼ °F
Guam and Rota	Thunderstorms	87° / 77°	
Palau	Thunderstorms	86° / 78°	
Yap	Thunderstorms	86° / 79°	
Chuuk	Thunderstorms	86° / 81°	
Pohnpei	Thunderstorms	85° / 79°	
Kosrae	Thunderstorms	85° / 79°	
Majuro	Thunderstorms	85° / 80°	

DAY	SUNRISE	SUNSET
Today	6:06 AM	6:30 PM
Friday	6:06 AM	6:30 PM
Saturday	6:05 AM	6:30 PM
Sunday	6:04 AM	6:30 PM
Monday	6:04 AM	6:31 PM

DAY	MOONRISE	MOONSET	MOONRISE
Today	-	6:57 AM	7:46 PM
Friday	-	7:45 AM	8:48 PM
Saturday	-	8:36 AM	9:50 PM
Sunday	-	9:29 AM	10:51 PM
Monday	-	10:23 AM	11:49 PM

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AROUND THE GLOBE			▲ ▼ °F
Auckland	Partly Cloudy	68° / 57°	
Beijing	Partly Cloudy	64° / 39°	
Hong Kong	Mostly Sunny	73° / 70°	
Honolulu	Partly Cloudy	81° / 69°	
London	Partly Cloudy	70° / 50°	
Los Angeles	Showers	57° / 50°	
Manila	Mostly Sunny	93° / 79°	
Melbourne	Partly Cloudy	72° / 55°	
Miami	Sunny	91° / 72°	
New York	Rain	54° / 41°	
Osaka	Partly Cloudy	59° / 43°	
Paris	Partly Cloudy	79° / 55°	
Busan	Partly Cloudy	55° / 45°	
Rome	Sunny	70° / 45°	
Salem	Thunderstorms	82° / 52°	
San Francisco	Partly Cloudy	59° / 50°	
Seoul	Mostly Sunny	61° / 36°	
Tokyo	Mostly Sunny	61° / 45°	
Washington, DC	Thunderstorms	59° / 43°	

TIDES: SAIPAN HARBOR TODAY			FEET
2:27 AM	LOW TIDE	0.38	
8:15 AM	HIGH TIDE	2.08	
2:53 PM	LOW TIDE	0.04	
9:04 PM	HIGH TIDE	2.09	

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NMI CRIME STOPPERS

Anonymous tips can now be submitted through the following:

- Call 234-7272 (PARA) on any telephone
- *11 on any IT&E cellular phone
- Log on to the internet at www.nmicrimestoppers.net



COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

GOVERNMENT RESOURCE LISTING AS OF MARCH 27, 2020



COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

GOVERNMENT RESOURCE LISTING AS OF MARCH 27, 2020



Commonwealth Utilities Corporation (CUC)
Monday - Friday
Customer Service & Customer Service
8:00 AM - 1:00 PM
Tel: (670) 664-4282
Pay bills online at www.cucgov.org or via phone by calling toll free 1-855-729-2282



Office of the Attorney General Civil and Criminal Divisions
Monday - Friday
8:00 AM - 12:00 PM
Tel: (670) 237-7500/7600



Department of Community and Cultural Affairs Nutrition Assistance Program (NAP)
Monday - Friday
8:00 AM - 3:00 PM
Tel: (670) 237-2801/2802



Department of Finance Division of Revenue & Taxation
CASHIER ONLY
Monday - Friday
7:30 AM - 4:30 PM
Tel: (670) 664-1000



Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP)
Accepting Calls From Existing Customers Only
Tel: (670) 287-1475



Division of Youth Services (DYS) On-Call
Saipan: (670) 285-2780 / 285-2781 / 287-1773
Tinian: (670) 287-3268
Rota: (670) 287-2553



Department of Public Works (DPW) Solid Waste Management Division Lower Base Transfer Station
OPEN ALL WEEK EXCEPT WEDNESDAY
7:30 AM - 11:00 AM
Tel: (670) 322-3745



Chalan Kanoa Post Office
Monday - Friday
7:30 AM - 4:30 PM
Saturday
7:30 AM - 11:30 AM




Marpi Landfill
OPEN ALL WEEK EXCEPT WEDNESDAY
7:30 AM - 3:00 PM
Tel: (670) 322-2761



Office of the Public Defender
Monday - Friday
8:30 AM - 3:00 PM
Tel: (670) 234-6503

COMMONWEALTH HEALTHCARE CORPORATION



COVID-19 Health Tent
Patients arriving at CHCC with respiratory symptoms or fever will be screened outside of the main CHCC facility in a tent near the main hospital entrance on the upper level. Operating Monday - Friday (7:00 AM - 6:00 PM) and Saturday - Sunday (8:00 AM - 5:00 PM)

Mental Health Care Line
For mental health support and coping skills. Please call (670) 285-1856/1857. Monday - Sunday (7:30 AM - 7:00 PM)

Outpatient Clinics
Family Care Clinic: Monday - Friday (7:30 AM - 4:30 PM) and Saturday (8:00 AM - 5:00 PM by appointment only)

Women's Clinic: Monday - Friday (7:30 AM - 4:30 PM)

Children's Clinic: Monday - Friday (7:30 AM - 4:30 PM)

Pharmacy
Monday - Friday: 8:00 AM - 6:00 PM
Saturday, Sunday and Holidays: 8:00 AM - 5:00 PM
Patients can call ahead to refill prescriptions. Have your prescription number ready. Tel: (670) 236-8798

Immunization Clinic
For child vaccinations, please visit the CHCC Children's Clinic. For adult vaccinations, please visit CHCC Family's Care Clinic

Tuberculosis/Hansen's Prevention Program
Patients of these programs will be contacted by program staff for more information.

HIV/STD Prevention Program
Patients of these programs will be contacted by program staff for more information.

Breast and Cervical Cancer Screening Program and Nicotine Cessation Programs are temporarily unavailable.

Cafeteria
The cafeteria has adjusted their hours to Monday - Friday 7:00 AM - 1:00 PM. We are limiting the number of visitors in the cafeteria to 10 people at one time.

Dental Clinic
The CHCC's Dental Clinic is currently open for dental emergencies only. Dental emergencies include: heavy bleeding from the mouth, tooth trauma, swelling or infection, and severe toothaches (pain prevents you from eating or sleeping and is does not respond to over the counter pain medication).

Visitors to CHCC
All visitors to the CHCC will be screened, and their temperature taken. Non-patients with a fever will not be allowed in the facility. No guests are allowed in the CHCC hospital. Patients who are admitted to the hospital will be limited to one caretaker at a time. Outpatient visits to the clinics are limited to the patient and a maximum of one other person. For example, if a child has an appointment in the Children's Clinic, only one parent or guardian may accompany them. Parents with multiple children should leave other children with a caretaker. Please plan accordingly.

Dialysis
Temporarily not allowing visitors and caregivers to sit with patients on dialysis during treatment. Patients on dialysis, please call the CHCC Dialysis Center ahead of time at (670) 236-8303/4 if you are experiencing a new cough, fever, shortness of breath, or any other symptoms that are unusual for you.

Funerals
If you plan to visit the CHCC chapel for a funeral, you will be asked to limit the number of visitors in the chapel at one time. This is done to increase the physical space between individuals so we can avoid the spread of illness and protect the safety of our health care facility. Your cooperation is highly appreciated.

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COVID-19 HOTLINE TEL: (670) 285-1352 /1542/1672/1845
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Business

By **BEA CABRERA**

beacabrerasaipan@gmail.com
CORRESPONDENT

Many restaurants and supermarkets in the CNMI usually source their produce from different parts of the world. Despite keeping it frozen for the duration of travel, items becoming spoiled before reaching the consumers still happen.

Caravan of Greens aims to fill the void and make fresh produce closer to the community by creating a farm-to-table concept where restaurants and supermarkets get their items through direct acquisition from local producers and farmers in the CNMI.

According to Caravan of Greens owner and local farmer Abed Salam C. Younis, his background is rich in farming influence. "We have a land

Caravan of Greens: Fresh produce for the community

that has been farmed by my father since the 1980s and I took over in 2013 as YAS Farms... in 2015, I inherited my father's restaurant, Caravan of Food, and saw the opportunity to create a farm-to-table concept by providing fresh harvested produce and using it in our dishes," he said.

"Due to the popularity of this concept, we wanted to share it with the rest of the island and provide sustain-



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Caravan of Greens delivers fresh produce to the restaurants, supermarkets, and consumers.

market and delivered via Eats Easy, a food and groceries delivery app. "Due to stay-at-home guidelines, we have limited our door-to-door delivery. People can download the Eats Easy app on their phones or visit conquerthehunger.com to get produce delivered... we have cucumber available and we are currently growing tomatoes, cucumbers, eggplant, okra, hot pepper, sweet potato, pumpkin, and string beans... you can also buy our local produce at Joeten Dandan, Susupe, and Kagman," Younis said.

"We are committed to providing locally grown produce that is not only healthy, but environmentally friendly... although we are not certified organic, we use sustainable organic methods of farming... Caravan of Greens strives to

be environmentally conscious by using minimal plastic and delivering produce in reusable bags or boxes," Younis added.

As Caravan of Greens promotes sustainability, they are also open to have their platform help create a co-op of sustainable farmers in the CNMI. "We are encouraging farmers to seek assistance from the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service to become an Environmental Quality Incentive Program partner," Younis said.

"EQIP is a voluntary program that provides financial and technical assistance to eligible agricultural producers who are willing to address priority environmental issues by implementing conservation practices on their farm. Our farm has been an NRCS partner since 2013 and we are in compliance with local environmental regulations," Younis added.

With its vision, the underlying benefits help boost the local economy and local farmers. "This way, people are walking away with a wholesome product that supports local farmers, the economy and a healthy environment," Younis said.

For more information, follow them on Instagram and Facebook @caravanofgreens and email: marianascaravan@gmail.com

Mnuchin: Additional \$250B sought for small businesses

WASHINGTON (AP)—The Trump administration will seek an additional \$250 billion to support a program designed to help small businesses keep workers employed through the coronavirus outbreak, Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin said.

Mnuchin said in a tweet on Tuesday that he was seeking the additional funds at the direction of President Donald Trump. He said he had spoken with Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell as well as House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and Senate Democratic Leader Chuck Schumer.

In a separate tweet, McConnell said he would work with Mnuchin and Schumer with the goal of approving the additional money for the program, known as the Paycheck Protection Program, at the Senate's next scheduled session Thursday. McConnell said he would seek to win approval either by unanimous consent or by a voice vote.

The money would bolster a key program in the \$2.2 trillion rescue measure that Congress passed to try to cushion the economy from a deep slide caused by the efforts to contain the coronavirus.

The request would provide more funds for a \$349 billion small business loan program that was created as part of the

\$2.2 trillion rescue program Congress passed last month.

The program supplies forgivable loans to small businesses with 500 or fewer employees. It is being administered by the Small Business Administration and the Treasury Department.

A small business can use 75% of the loan to keep paying its employees and the other 25% to meet overhead such as rent and utilities. The payroll protection is for eight weeks and if the business keeps its employees on the payroll or rehires workers who have been laid off, the loan will be forgiven.

The program just began operating last Friday but the rollout has been plagued by a host of problems. Small business owners have complained that they are unable to get through to the SBA or the banks to apply for loans or they are being rejected by banks who say they are only accepting applications from businesses that are already customers of the bank.

Mnuchin in a Fox Business Network interview Tuesday sought to play down any problems. "We have over 3,000 lenders that are already participating. We couldn't be more pleased with the broad appeal of this program," Mnuchin said.

able fresh local vegetables directly to consumers and this is why we started Caravan of

Greens," he added.

Currently, Caravan of Greens is an online farmers

Computer issues at SBA said to hold up small business loans

NEW YORK (AP)—Small business owners hoping for quick help from the government's emergency \$349 billion lending program were still waiting Tuesday amid reports of computer problems at the Small Business Administration.

The SBA's loan processing system stopped working Monday, making it impossible for loans to be approved and funds distributed, according to a trade group for community bankers and the CEO of an online lending marketplace. And there was confusion about the documents lenders needed from customers to complete loan transactions, they said.

"We are getting thousands of applications but many of our members can't get into the SBA's system or there are additional holdups," said Paul Merski at the Independent Community Bankers of America.

Thousands of companies are

at risk of failure without a cash infusion. Even those that have laid off their staffs face bills like rent, mortgage payments, insurance, utilities and taxes. Many companies that are still working have lost revenue as their customers turned cautious and canceled orders or projects.

SBA spokeswoman Carol Wilkerson said Tuesday afternoon that there have been more than 275,000 applications received for loans valued at \$75 billion since the program launched. Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin had predicted last week that loans could be turned around and money transferred to businesses' bank accounts the same day as applications were received.

Wilkerson did not address a question about whether the agency's computer system was functioning properly.

A large percentage of com-

munity banks—small banks that serve rural areas and small towns—have been unable to get logged into the system as well. Two small bank CEOs pleaded with President Trump on Tuesday in a conference call to get the smaller banks approved.

"We have been boxed out of the program," said Noah Wilcox of Grand Rapids State Bank.

The loans of up to \$10 million to business owners and freelancers under what's called the Paycheck Protection Program are intended to help companies retain workers or rehire those laid off as businesses shut down across the country. Nearly 10 million Americans applied for unemployment benefits in the last two weeks of March, many of them let go by restaurants and retailers.

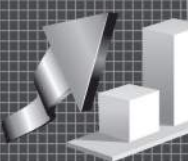
The loans offer forgiveness if the proceeds are used for

workers' pay, and payments can be deferred for six months.

Owners have also run into problems applying to banks. Some banks, including JPMorgan Chase and Citibank, two of the nation's largest, were still telling customers Tuesday that they weren't ready to accept applications. Others, including Wells Fargo, have turned away applicants because they reached their lending limit.

Many banks refused applications unless companies were established customers—some were requiring companies to have deposit accounts and loans in order for the application to go through. The banks have come under criticism that they are making loans just to existing customers, but bankers have said the documents required to verify new customers' identities require time and resources they currently do not have.

STOCK PORTFOLIO



LEADING INDICATORS

DOW

22,653.86
-26.13
0.12%

S&P

2,659.41
-4.27
0.18%

NASDAQ

7,887.26
-25.98
0.33%

EXCHANGE RATES

In U.S. dollar terms

Australian Dollar	1.6295
British Pound	0.8117
Canadian Dollar	1.4033
Chinese Yuan	6.9416
Euro	0.9201

Hong Kong Dollar	7.7513
Indian Rupee	75.0060
Japanese Yen	108.8760
Malaysian Ringgit	4.2873
New Zealand Dollar	1.6779
Philippine Peso	49.6365

Russian Ruble	75.0511
Singapore Dollar	1.4275
South Korean Won	1,192.53
Swiss Franc	0.9718
Taiwan Dollar	29.3797
Thailand Baht	32.7800

Nation

Modeling coronavirus: 'Uncertainty is the only certainty'

SEATTLE (AP)—A statistical model cited by the White House generated a slightly less grim figure Monday for a first wave of deaths from the coronavirus pandemic in the U.S.—a projection designed to help officials plan for the worst, including having enough hospital staff, beds and ventilators.

The only problem with this bit of relatively good news? It's almost certainly wrong. All models are wrong. Some are just less wrong than others—and those are the ones that public health officials rely on.

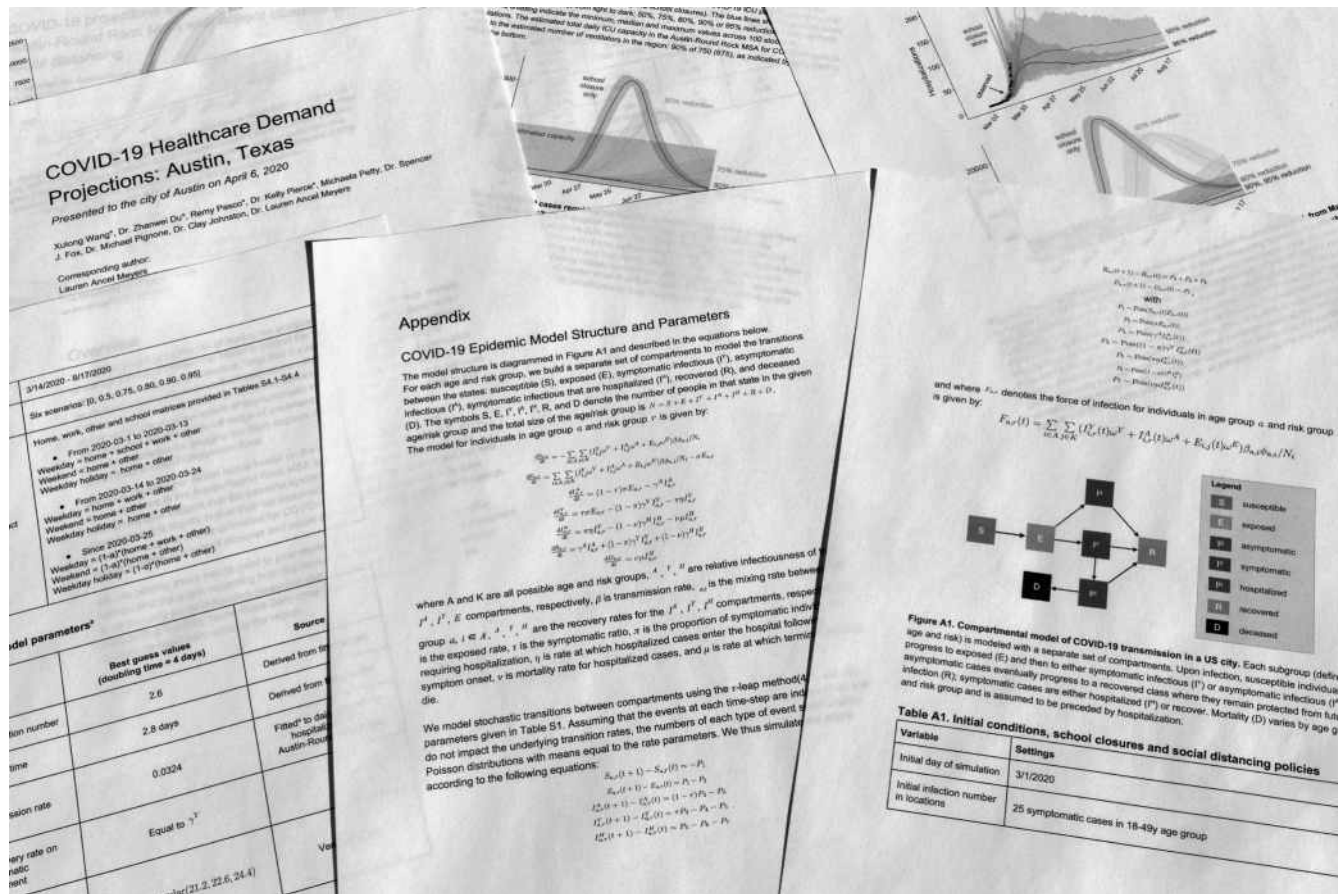
Welcome to the grimace-and-bear-it world of modeling.

"The key thing is that you want to know what's happening in the future," said NASA top climate modeler Gavin Schmidt. "Absent a time machine you're going to have to use a model."

Weather forecasters use models. Climate scientists use them. Supermarkets use them.

As leaders try to get a handle on the coronavirus outbreak, they are turning to numerous mathematical models to help them figure out what might—key word, might—happen next and what they should try to do now to contain and prepare for the spread.

The model updated this week by the University of Washington—the one most often mentioned by U.S. health officials at White House briefings—predicts daily deaths in



In this Monday, April 6, 2020, photo, a report delivered to the city of Austin, Texas, on COVID-19 health care demand is photographed in Frederick, Md.

the U.S. will hit a peak in mid-April then decline through the summer.

Their latest projection shows that anywhere from 49,431 to 136,401 Americans will die in the first wave, which will last into the summer. That's a huge range of 87,000. But only a few days earlier the same team had a range of nearly 138,000, with 177,866 as the top number of

deaths. Officials credit social distancing.

The latest calculations are based on better data on how the virus acts, more information on how people act and more cities as examples. For example, new data from Italy and Spain suggest social distancing is working even better than expected to stop the spread of the virus.

The time it took for the

epidemic to peak—that is, for those deaths to start declining—was shorter in those Italian and Spanish cities than it was Wuhan, China, said Dr. Christopher Murray of the University of Washington, who developed the model.

So how does modeling work? Take everything we know about how the coronavirus is spreading, when it's deadly and when it's not, when symptoms show and

when they don't.

Then factor in everything we know about how people are reacting, social distancing, stay-at-home orders and other squishy human factors.

Now add everything we know about testing, treating the disease and equipment shortages. Finally, mix in large dollops of uncertainty at every level.

Squeeze all those thousands of data points into incredibly

complex mathematical equations and voila, here's what's going to happen next with the pandemic. Except, remember, there's a huge margin of error: For the prediction of U.S. deaths, the range is larger than the population of Wilmington, Delaware.

"No model is perfect, but most models are somewhat useful," said John Allen Paulos, a professor of math at Temple University and author of several books about math and everyday life. "But we can't confuse the model with reality."

One challenge for modelers is dealing with seesawing death totals from overburdened public health departments. A state's data might show big swings in deaths—but only because a backlog of reports showed up all at once. The tremendous leaps in deaths in a single day could throw off predictions.

Another problem, said University of Texas disease modeler Lauren Ancel Meyers, is that most of the pandemic models, including hers, are based on how influenza acts, and that is different from this new coronavirus.

Most models use calculus to factor in "things you can't predict," Meyers said. To her, they are simple equations, ones that a person who knows advanced calculus can figure out. To the rest of the world, it's Greek. Literally full of sigmas, phis, omegas and other symbols.

One fortunate 90-year-old survived COVID-19, and offers hope

Anna Fortunato, a 90-year-old survivor of COVID-19, has a message for the rest of us:

Do not be afraid. Do not despair.

"Keep on fighting, have that positive attitude, and pray," she says. "And get out of bed. Don't stay in bed all the time. ... And I want to say to them, 'If I did it, you can do it.'"

That she is here to advise others is something of a surprise to Fortunato herself.

"In the hospital, they said I was a miracle," said the Long Island woman, a daughter of Italian immigrants born the year the stock market crashed. "Maybe I was. But I worked at it, let me tell you something."

The widowed mother of five developed asthma late in life but was otherwise healthy and strong. She lived in her own apartment until about a year ago, when she moved into assisted living after a fall.

At The Arbors in Jericho, Fortunato—whose last name is Italian for "lucky"—was a

regular at bingo and was always up for casino excursions.

She began feeling ill March 13. She'd heard about COVID-19 but didn't give it much thought.

"I have a sore throat, but it's just a cold," she told daughter Teresa Gund on the phone. "I'll be fine."

Through the weekend, her coughing got worse. Gund told the Arbors staff to call an ambulance. Staring weakly into a nurse's smartphone, Fortunato saw the fear in her daughter's eyes.

As Gund recalls: "She says, 'Don't you worry. I will be fine. I have all the faith in God ... and God is going to get me through this. He doesn't want me right now. He wants me to stay here with you guys.'"

For most people, the virus causes mild or moderate symptoms, such as fever and cough that clear up in two to three weeks. For some, especially older adults and people with existing health problems, it can

cause more severe illness, including pneumonia and death.

As her condition worsened, Gund asked about giving her mother last rites. The hospital said it was too dangerous to bring in a priest.

In desperation, Gund said, Fortunato's doctors administered an anti-malaria drug repeatedly touted by President Donald Trump. Its safety or effectiveness against the coronavirus have not been proven; some preliminary reports suggest it might help, but there is no way to know whether it has aided in the recovery of any particular patient.

Whether due to that or any other treatment, Fortunato began to improve.

After 13 days in the hospital, she was discharged.

It will still be a while before Fortunato can hug her family or go back to Sunday Mass or play the slots with her fellow residents, who are now all confined to their rooms because of her illness.

CDC weighs loosening guidelines for some exposed to virus

WASHINGTON (AP)—The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention is considering changing its guidelines for self-isolation to make it easier for those who have been exposed to someone with the coronavirus to return to work if they are asymptomatic.

The public health agency, in conjunction with the White House coronavirus task force, is considering an announcement as soon as Wednesday, Vice President Mike Pence said on Tuesday.

Under the proposed guidance, people who are exposed to someone infected would be allowed back on the job if they are asymptomatic, test their temperature twice a day and wear a face mask, said a person familiar with the proposal under consideration. The person described the proposal on the condition of anonymity because the draft had not been finalized.

The new policy is aimed in particular at workers in criti-

cal jobs. But it also comes as the Trump administration is eyeing what it calls a "stabilization" in infection rates and looks toward rolling back some of the restrictive social-distancing guidelines and restarting the nation's stalled economy.

The proposed guidance would follow recommendations made by the CDC that eased self-isolation requirements for front-line medical workers who were exposed to the virus. Under CDC guidance, medical workers who have been exposed to the virus without protective equipment but who have no symptoms can return to work with a mask and temperature checks after 14 days.

Pence on Tuesday said the White House is focusing on the "point of need" for the current situation but is also operating on another track to consider future recommendations for the public.

"Some of the best minds here at the White House are beginning to think about what recommendations will look like that we give to businesses, that we give to states, but it will all, I promise you, be informed on putting the health and well-being of the American people first," Pence said.

For most people, the new coronavirus causes mild or moderate symptoms, such as fever and cough that clear up in two to three weeks. For some, especially older adults and people with existing health problems, it can cause more severe illness, including pneumonia, and death.

In fashioning the recommendations, the administration appeared to be trying to balance political concerns about wanting to preserve as much normalcy as possible with public health concerns that some infections are being spread by people who seem to be healthy.

Asia

China's virus pandemic epicenter Wuhan ends 76-day lockdown

WUHAN, China (AP)—After 11 weeks of lockdown, people went outdoors and by the thousands boarded the first trains and planes leaving Wuhan as the last restrictions on movement were lifted Wednesday in the Chinese city where the coronavirus pandemic began.

Wuhan's unprecedented lockdown was a model for countries trying to stop the coronavirus. With the restrictions ending, Hubei's provincial capital begins another experiment: resuming business and ordinary life while preventing more illnesses.

The city's 11 million residents are now permitted to leave without special authorization as long as a mandatory smartphone application powered by a mix of data-tracking and government surveillance shows they are healthy and have not been in recent contact with anyone confirmed to have the virus.

The occasion was marked with a light show on either side of the broad Yangtze River, with skyscrapers and bridges radiating animated images of health workers aiding patients, along with one displaying the words "heroic city," a title bestowed on Wuhan by president and Communist Party leader Xi Jinping. Along the embankments and bridges, citizens waved flags, chanted "Wuhan, let's go!" and sang a capella renditions of China's national anthem.

"I haven't been outside for more than 70 days," said an emotional Tong Zhengkun,



AP
Passengers wearing protective suits to protect against the spread of new coronavirus gather outside of Hankou train station ahead of the resumption of train services in Wuhan in central China's Hubei Province, Wednesday, April 8, 2020.

who was watching the display from a bridge. Residents in his apartment complex had contracted the virus, so the entire building was shut down. He couldn't go out even to buy groceries, which neighborhood workers brought to his door.

"Being indoors for so long drove me crazy," he said.

It didn't take long for traffic to begin moving swiftly through the reopened bridges, tunnels and highway toll booths, while hundreds waited for the first trains and flights out of the city, many hoping to return to jobs

elsewhere. Nearly 1,000 vehicles went through a busy highway toll booth at Wuhan's border between midnight—when barricades were lifted—and 7 a.m., according to Yan Xiangsheng, a district police chief.

Within hours of the lockdown ending, roughly 65,000 people had left the city by train and plane alone, according to local media.

Restrictions in the city where most of China's more than 82,000 virus cases and over 3,300 deaths from COVID-19 were reported have

been gradually eased in recent weeks as the number of new cases steadily declined. The government reported no new cases Wednesday.

While there are questions about the veracity of China's count, the unprecedented lockdown of Wuhan and Hubei have been successful enough that other countries adopted similar measures.

"The people in Wuhan paid out a lot and bore a lot mentally and psychologically," resident Zhang Xiang said. "Wuhan people are historically famous for their strong will."

During the 76-day lockdown, Wuhan residents had been allowed out of their homes only to buy food or attend to other tasks deemed absolutely necessary. Some

were allowed to leave the city, but only if they had paperwork showing they were not a health risk and a letter attesting to where they were going and why. Even then, authorities could turn them back on a technicality such as missing a stamp, preventing thousands from returning to their jobs outside the city.

Residents of other parts of Hubei were allowed to leave the province starting about three weeks ago, as long as they could provide a clean bill of health.

Despite the new freedom, many prevention measures such as wearing masks, temperature checks and limiting access to residential communities will remain in place in Wuhan. And people leaving the city will face numerous hurdles, such as 14-day quarantines and nucleic acid tests, at their destinations.

In an editorial, the ruling Communist Party's flagship People's Daily warned against celebrating too soon.

China investigates party member critical of Xi over outbreak

BEIJING (AP)—A prominent Communist party member who criticized Chinese leader Xi Jinping's handling of the coronavirus outbreak is being investigated on suspicion of a "severe violation of discipline and law," a joint government-party watchdog said.

Ren Zhiqiang is a former head of state-run real estate conglomerate Huayuan Group and a party member who has become known for his outspokenness on sensitive topics such as press censorship.

He dropped from sight in mid-March after publishing an online essay that criticized the leadership's handling of the virus outbreak that originated in December in central China. While government data show COVID-19 apparently subsiding in China, more than 1.4 million people have been infected worldwide.

A one-sentence notice issued Tuesday by the party-

government joint disciplinary watchdog body in Beijing's western district said Ren was undergoing a "review and monitoring investigation" but gave no details and did not mention Ren's article or previous statements.

The article, since deleted by China's censors, is an example of the various criticisms of Xi and the party's handling of the emergency that have appeared online, the one space where Chinese can exercise a modicum of free speech, albeit under the close watch of party monitors.

Criticism has chiefly focused on allegations of early efforts to squelch news of the outbreak, the true numbers of those who have become sickened and died, and efforts by Xi and the party to portray themselves as riding to the rescue when no others could lead China out of the crisis.

Chinese police also reprimanded and threatened

a group of medical workers who spread word of the threat early in the outbreak, one of whom, a doctor, later died from COVID-19.

Ren, 69, had an early military career and his parents were both former high officials in the Communist party, leading some to call him a princeling, an oft-used reference to the offspring of the founders of the People's Republic—including Xi. That status might have provided him with some immunity from prosecution, although he appears to have crossed a line by criticizing Xi's personal leadership, whether by name or implication.

Since taking over the helm of the party in 2012, Xi has shown himself entirely intolerant of any criticism and has cracked down heavily on free media and civil society, jailing scores of journalists, lawyers and non-governmental activists on labor and other issues.

Bleaching on Great Barrier Reef more widespread than ever

BRISBANE, Australia (AP)—An aerial survey of the Great Barrier Reef shows coral bleaching is sweeping across the area off the east of Australia for the third time in five years.

Bleaching has struck all three regions of the world's largest coral reef system and is more widespread than ever, scientists from James Cook University in Queensland state said Tuesday.

The air surveys of 1,036 reefs in the past two weeks found bleached coral in the northern, central and southern areas, James Cook University professor Terry Hughes said.

"As summers grow hotter and hotter, we no longer need an El Nino event to trigger mass bleaching at the scale of the Great Barrier Reef," Hughes said. "Of the five events we have seen so far, only 1998 and 2016 occurred during El Nino conditions."

El Nino is a climate pattern that starts with a band of warm ocean water in the central and east-central Pacific around the equator and affects global weather.

The Great Barrier Reef is

made up of 2,900 separate reefs and 900 islands. It is unable to recover because there is not enough time between bleaching events.

"We have already seen the first example of back-to-back bleaching—in the consecutive summers of 2016 and 2017," Hughes said, adding that the number of reefs spared from bleaching is shrinking as it becomes more widespread.

He said underwater surveys will be carried out later in the year to assess the extent of damage.

In early March, David Wachenfeld, chief scientist at the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority, said the reef was facing a critical period of heat stress over the coming weeks following the most widespread coral bleaching the natural wonder has ever endured.

The authority, the government agency that manages the coral expanse off northeast Australia, said ocean temperatures over the next month would be crucial to how the reef recovers from heat-induced bleaching.

"The forecasts ... indicate that we can expect ongoing

levels of thermal stress for at least the next two weeks and maybe three or four weeks," Wachenfeld said in a weekly update on the reef's health.

"So this still is a critical time for the reef and it is the weather conditions over the next two to four weeks that will determine the final outcome," he said.

Ocean temperatures across most of the reef were 0.5 to 1.5 degrees Celsius (0.9 to 2.7 degrees Fahrenheit) above the March average.

In parts of the marine park in the south close to shore that avoided the ravages of previous bleachings, ocean temperatures were 2 to 3 degrees Celsius (3.6 to 5.4 degrees Fahrenheit) above average.

The authority had received 250 reports of sightings of bleached coral due to elevated ocean temperatures during an unusually hot February.

The 345,400-square kilometer (133,360-square mile) World Heritage-listed colorful coral network has been devastated by four coral bleaching events since 1998. The most deadly were the most recent, in those consecutive summers of 2016 and 2017.

World

Virus crisis cuts off billions sent to poor around the world

MIAMI (AP)—Until a month ago, Diana Leticia Hernández sold face cream door to door in Miami. Her husband painted houses. The money fed their family and at least six relatives in Honduras.

Hernández has sold nothing since last month due to fear and social-distancing restrictions in South Florida. Her husband hasn't worked either. This month, for the first time since shortly after their arrival in the United States 16 years ago, they weren't able to send

home about \$300 to help their families with food, rent, medicine and school bills.

In the Honduran town of Villa Nueva Cortez, Hernández's mother Teonila Murillo is running out of money to buy insulin for her diabetes, and Hernández's brother doesn't know if he'll be able to make his \$60 rent next month.

"I'm doing really badly," Murillo told The Associated Press. "There's no money, and no work. If you get sick here, you die."

The devastation wrought by COVID-19 across the developed world in cutting into the financial lifelines for people across Latin America, Africa and Asia.

The World Bank estimates that a record \$529 billion was transferred to developing countries through official channels in 2018, the latest year for which figures are available. Billions more moved unrecorded in cash. Many of those remittances are sent home by people who

work in service jobs or occupations, like day labor, that have no monthly paycheck and are worst affected by the global downturn. Some also comes from migrants who have entered countries without legal status and are ineligible for part of the massive aid packages uncorked by advanced economies.

With coronavirus shutting down industries, many earners in Miami, Las Vegas, London, and other economic centers can no longer afford to send their

monthly \$50, \$100 or \$200 to Honduras, Somalia or India. The shock waves are pushing their relatives to desperation.

"I'm in anguish," said Hernández, 45. "They're counting on me. I'm trying to get anything I can send, \$30, \$50, whatever."

Across Africa, where remittances have grown to surpass foreign aid and direct foreign investment and some \$82 billion flowed in during 2018 alone, untold millions of people are already feeling the pinch. One money-transfer company in Europe sending funds to Africa saw an 80 percent drop in volume in a single week, the Washington-based Center for Financial Inclusion said last month.

In Somalia Abdalla Sabdow, a former security guard and a father of six, made his way through Mogadishu last week to check on the \$200 he receives monthly from his cousin Yusuf Ahmed, a taxi driver in

the U.S. But the money was late. His cousin, like many in the U.S., had been confined to his home for almost three weeks, unable to work.

"I came back empty-handed," an anxious-looking Sabdow said, after peering under the partition as workers, one wearing a face mask and gloves, fanned through stacks of crisp \$100 bills. "I asked the counter to double-check my name, but nothing has been forthcoming. Time is running out ... It is very distressing."

With three of his small children piled onto his lap at home, he worried about falling behind in rent, no small thing in a city where camps of hundreds of thousands of internally displaced people are a constant reminder of the fragility of circumstances.

"This month we had a big problem," his cousin, Ahmed, later explained by phone. He hoped to send the money the following week.



In this April 3, 2020 photo, a woman carrying a child walks past a closed courier business featuring a U.S. flag and the Spanish phrase: "Send to U.S.A" in the largely indigenous town of Joyabaj, Guatemala, where half of the residents depend on remittances, almost all from the U.S.

Mexico urges end to harassment of health workers in pandemic

MEXICO CITY (AP)—They are the first line of defense against the COVID-19 pandemic, but in parts of Mexico, doctors, nurses and other health workers are being harassed to the point that federal authorities have pleaded for Mexicans to show solidarity.

While tributes to courageous medical personnel putting themselves in the virus' path circle the globe, Mexico and some other places have seen disturbing aggression born of fear.

Recently, a hospital in Guadalajara—Mexico's second-largest city—were told to wear civilian clothes to and from work rather than their scrubs or uniforms because some public buses refused to allow them to board. Other medical personnel have reported attacks and this week someone threw flammable liquid on the

doors of a new hospital under construction in the northern border state of Nuevo Leon.

"There have been cases, you could say isolated, but all outrageous," Mexican undersecretary of health Hugo López-Gatell said Monday night. "Fear produces irrational reactions, reactions that make no sense, have no foundation and have no justification when they have to do with respecting the dignity and the physical integrity of people."

It also comes as the Mexican government has embarked in a massive recruiting drive to bolster the thin ranks of its public health system before the virus hits with its full force.

"It's even more outrageous when it concerns the health professionals that we all depend on in this moment, because they are on the front lines facing this epidemic,"

López-Gatell said. "The declaration is of indignation and a demand that this not occur because it is completely punishable, sanctionable and won't be allowed."

Mexico has nearly 2,800 confirmed COVID-19 infections and 141 deaths. For most people, the new coronavirus causes mild or moderate symptoms, such as fever and cough that clear up in two to three weeks. For some, especially older adults and people with existing health problems, it can cause more severe illness, including pneumonia and death.

Authorities were moved to speak out publicly because the incidents have continued spreading. Harassment of medical personnel in the western city of Guadalajara became a daily occurrence in recent weeks.

Edith Mujica Chávez, president of Jalisco state's Inter-institutional Commission of Nurses, denounced the attacks including physical aggression, verbal harassment and even having bleach solutions thrown at nurses.

In a letter to Gov. Enrique Alfaro, her organization asked for help and public condemnation of the attacks.

"We all know we are potentially at risk in public health, but violence can never be tolerated, even though we are afraid of catching coronavirus," the letter said. "We have to maintain our mental health and share information so that they know nurses are not enemies of society."

A group of cab drivers calling themselves "Code Red" in that city banded together to offer free or reduced cost rides to health workers.

UN urges swift release of Mali's kidnapped opposition leader

UNITED NATIONS (AP)—The U.N. Security Council urged the government of Mali and armed groups Tuesday to accelerate implementation of a 2015 peace agreement and called for "the swift liberation" of kidnapped opposition leader Soumaila Cisse.

The council also called on Mali's government "to enhance its efforts to stem violence in the center" of the country and ensure that those responsible for human rights abuses and violations of international law are brought to justice.

The statement was issued after the Security Council held its first open meeting in nearly four weeks using video conferencing because of the coronavirus pandemic. For the first time since March 12, members of the media and the public watched as the council received a video briefing by the U.N. envoy for Mali, Mahamat Saleh Annadif.

Annadif said Mali had recorded 46 positive cases of COVID-19 disease, including one member of the U.N. peacekeeping force, and five deaths.

The council called on the more than 15,000-strong U.N. peacekeeping force to continue doing its job "despite the pandemic, while ensuring the safety and security of its staff and peace-

keepers."

Mali has been in turmoil since a 2012 uprising prompted mutinous soldiers to overthrow the president of a decade. The power vacuum that resulted ultimately led to an Islamic insurgency and a French-led war that ousted the jihadists from power in 2013.

Insurgents remain active in the region and Mali is under threat from a number of extremist groups affiliated with al-Qaida and the Islamic State movement. The extremists have moved from the arid north to more populated central Mali since 2015, stoking animosity and violence between ethnic groups in the region.

The Security Council condemned a "terrorist attack" Monday on an army post in the northern town of Bamba, which the Malian military said killed at least 25 soldiers and wounded six others. No group claimed responsibility but the attack bore the mark of armed groups linked to al-Qaida or Islamic State.

The 2015 peace agreement was signed by three parties—the government, a coalition of groups that seek autonomy in northern Mali and a pro-government militia.

The council welcomed the progress made so far in implementing the agreement, "while underlining that more progress was needed."

Life & Style

J.K. Rowling reveals probable coronavirus infection, says she's OK

By THERESA BRAINE
NEW YORK DAILY NEWS

"Harry Potter" author J.K. Rowling could have used a healing spell.

The British writer has revealed a two-week battle, now over, with a probable case of coronavirus, she said.

"For last 2 weeks I've had all symptoms of C19 (tho haven't been tested)," she tweeted Monday. "I'm fully recovered."

Rowling also posted video

Adam Sandler and Jimmy Fallon want to remind you not to touch Grandma

Tempted to hug your grandmother during the pandemic? Jimmy Fallon and Adam Sandler are here to remind you to stay the hell away from her.

The silly duo teamed up via video chat, with guitars in hand, to sing a duet on Monday's episode of "The Tonight Show: At Home Edition" about social distancing and steering clear of Grandma during the COVID-19 outbreak.

"I love my grandma so much, I know she loves me

of breathing exercises recommended by her husband, who is a doctor, that she said "helped me a lot."

All this not long after "Lord Voldemort" — really a fan site in Portugal that Rowling responds to in jest — tweeted at the author to "stay safe" during the pandemic, as Business Insider reported last week. She responded, "Thanks Voldy," with a heart emoji.

With her current revelation, Rowling joins a growing list

of celebrity coronavirus cases that includes Tom Hanks and his wife Rita Wilson, Idris Elba and Pink, among others.

Also during the past two weeks, she has launched a site aimed at magically zapping boredom for kids in quarantine, called Harry Potter at Home, reported Huffington Post. Rife with quizzes, articles, videos and puzzles, it promises to "cast a Banishing Charm on boredom."

She also announced that

Can't find a quarter? Is payphone technology too outdated for you? The pals also recommend Zoom. And if you want to learn to play canasta with your elderly relative, they urge you to do so from across the room.

But the short and sweet song ended on a hopeful, positive note: "And when this thing is over / You and she can play / But for now, you still can smell her grandma smell from 6 feet away." (*Los Angeles Times*)

Pulitzer Prize announcement to be postponed due to pandemic

NEW YORK (AP)—The Pulitzer Prize Board will postpone the announcement of this year's winners because some board members have been busy covering the global coronavirus outbreak, the organization announced Tuesday.

The announcement of Pulitzer winners in journalism and the arts will be postponed from April 20 to May 4, the board said.

Pulitzer Prize administrator Dana Canedy said the board includes many journalists

who are on the front lines of reporting on the coronavirus pandemic. "As they focus on this critical mission, this postponement will provide additional time to thoroughly evaluate the 2020 Pulitzer finalists," Canedy said.

She added, "More than ever, this moment highlights journalism's mission to provide a vital public service. It also demonstrates literature and the arts' ability to transport and uplift the human spirit during trying times. The

Pulitzer Prizes will continue its more than century-long mandate to celebrate such excellence."

The annual awards luncheon, traditionally held at Columbia University in May, will be postponed as well. Details of a fall reception for winners will be announced at a later date.

The Pulitzer Prizes in journalism were first awarded in 1917 and are considered the field's most prestigious honor in the U.S.

"Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone," the first book in her famed series, will be downloadable for free all over the world as an e-book and audiobook throughout this month, Reuters reported. It's another facet of her assist for parents, carers and teachers entertaining cooped-up kids.

Those efforts have been interspersed with exhortations to support Britain's National Health Service by staying at home.

Bruce Springsteen and Andrea Bocelli connect with music

Hoping to raise moods, Bruce Springsteen and Andrea Bocelli each plan to reach their fans with music—The Boss as a guest DJ and the tenor with a live performance.

Bocelli will give a solo livestreamed performance on Easter Sunday from the main historic cathedral in Milan, Italy.

"On the day in which we celebrate the trust in a life that triumphs, I'm honored and happy to answer 'Si' to the invitation of the city and the Duomo of Milan," Bocelli said in a statement.

There will be no audience present, but the concert will be exclusively streamed live globally on the tenor's YouTube channel from 6 p.m. UK time or 1 p.m. Eastern.

Springsteen will appear on SiriusXM's E Street Radio on Wednesday at 10 a.m. Eastern. According to E Street Radio host Jim Rotolo, Springsteen will be DJing music he's been listening to during the pandemic. (*AP*)



J.K. Rowling, pictured here on Feb. 12, 2017 at the BAFTA awards in London.
MATT CROSSICK/PA PHOTOS/ABACA PRESS

German court proposes ending trial over fatal music festival

BERLIN (AP)—A German court on Tuesday proposed ending a criminal trial resulting from a fatal mass panic at the 2010 Love Parade techno music festival, citing questions over when the proceedings could resume in light of the coronavirus pandemic.

German news agency dpa reported that the Duisburg state court suggested closing the trial in which three of the original 10 defendants face charges that include involuntary manslaughter and bodily harm. They were accused of planning failures and not mon-

itoring security properly at the event where 21 people died.

The court gave the parties in the case until April 20 to respond to the proposal. If they accept it, the trial would end without a verdict, and the statute of limitations on the charges expires in July.

The trial opened in 2017 in Duisburg, a city in western Germany where the festival took place. Prosecutors last year dropped their case against seven of the defendants; the three still on trial worked for event organizer Lopavent remain on trial.

Mom is caught in the middle between dad, adult children

DEAR ABBY: My husband wants me to stop speaking to our adult children. He says they have both offended him, and he wants an apology from them.

My daughter didn't help him when he was out of the home for a few months and had nowhere to go. At the time, she was living in her boyfriend's grandparents' home. She had asked them if it was OK, but they said no. My husband was hurt by this and wants her to apologize for "treating him this way." They no longer speak to each other and exchanged hurtful texts until my daughter blocked him.

My son, who just turned 18, is in college. He came home for a break and asked if he could stay with his girlfriend. I said yes. When my husband found out, he ordered our son to come home. My son pulled the "I'm 18; you can't tell me what to do." He then said our family crisis was causing his girlfriend to have anxiety and depression. This upset my husband because he felt he was being blamed for her issues and disrespected when my son refused to come home. My husband feels I should stop speaking to him, too, to support him.

I cannot bring myself to do this. My husband says our marriage is over if I can't support him. What would you do?

IN A FAMILY MESS

DEAR "MESS": Your husband is a handful. With his authoritarian attitude, he cannot seem to stop himself from alienating family members. He is acting like a bullying child. Right now, he is two for two and counting.

I do not think you should stop talking to your daughter for things beyond her control or for telling the truth. If you have any power at all in your marital relationship, please insist that all of you get family counseling from a licensed professional. Your husband needs to learn to communicate more effectively with his son. If your husband refuses to participate, and he may, then you have some important decisions about your future that I cannot make for you.

DEAR ABBY: My younger sister died two years ago. She was only 43. She left behind her husband of 19 years, three children, my parents and myself (along with many other family members and friends).

Her choice was to be cremated. As a family, we discussed my brother-in-law's plans for the ashes. He discussed various options and we, of course, shared our desires and wishes. Her ashes remained in the cardboard box from the funeral home on a shelf in their living room until my brother-in-law moved into a new place a year later.

My mother finally confronted him. She said it was disrespectful not to have finalized a resting place for her daughter. She said she knew the ashes belong to him because he's the husband. His response was he was sorry she felt that way. Now we don't know what he's done with them. He became engaged 15 months after my sister's death and has been living with his fiancée.

This seems so wrong to me and so dismissive of my sister and my family. What can we do? We want a final resting place for

DEAR ABBY

By Abigail Van Buren
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.



her. We think his actions show he obviously doesn't care.

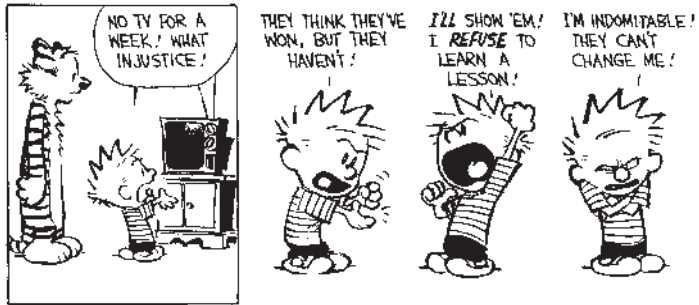
DISILLUSIONED AND HEARTBROKEN

DEAR D&H: That's not necessarily true. Your former brother-in-law may care so much about his late wife that he cannot let the ashes go. I hope you will maintain contact with him because it's a way to keep track of those ashes. As his wedding date grows near, he may soften his stance and allow them to be divided, perhaps with some prodding from his new wife, which may be the solution that's best for everyone concerned.

Good advice for everyone — teens to seniors — is in "The Anger in All of Us and How to Deal With It." To order, send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for \$8 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby, Anger Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-

Pastimes

Calvin and Hobbes



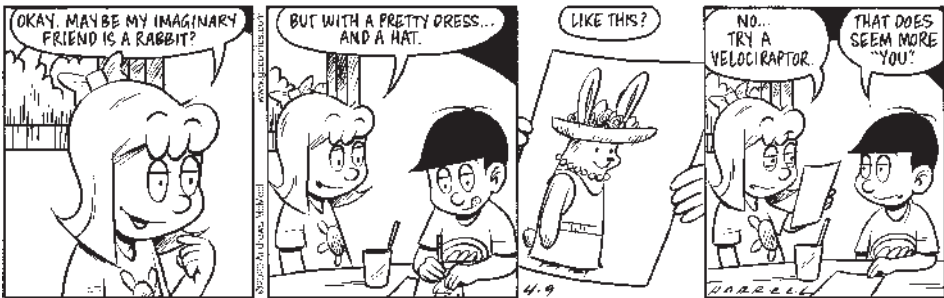
By Bill Waterson

Garfield®



By Jim Davis

Adam@home



By Bryan Basset

The Duplex



By Glenn McCoy

CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS

1 Test version
5 LPs' successors
8 Band boosters
12 Former Yankee slugger, to fans
13 Picnic crasher
14 Maui meal
15 Actor Schreiber
16 Singer Carly — Jepsen
17 Teen's woe
18 Third-largest ocean
20 Reduces to pulp
22 That lady
23 Reggae relative
24 Spiked club
27 Cold Spanish soup
32 Somewhat (Suff.)
33 Hot temper
34 "So there!"

DOWN

35 Seafood soups
38 Without help
39 — Magnon
40 Gratuity
42 Unemotional types
45 Buffoons
49 Web addresses
50 Weeding tool
52 "Somebody's Gotta Do It" host
53 Spruced up
54 Enterprise letters
55 Grand tale

56 Gels
57 Bottom line
58 Taxpayer IDs

10 Glazier's sheet
11 Litigates
19 "I see"
21 Venomous viper
24 Karaoke prop, for short
25 Cigar residue
26 2000 Juliette Binoche film
28 Schedule abbr.
29 Most piquant
30 "2001" computer
31 Discoverer's call
36 Places for bracelets
37 Medico
38 Church toppers
41 Freudian concept
42 Phoenix cagers
43 Fir or yew
44 Avoid
46 "Clumsy mel"
47 Clone
48 Brief moments
51 Sugary suffix

Solution time: 24 mins.

Yesterday's answer 4-9

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Elle Fanning, 22; Kristen Stewart, 30; Leighton Meester, 34; Dennis Quaid, 66.

Happy Birthday: Refrain from making unnecessary changes this year. If uncertainty prevails, give yourself a chance to absorb what's going on. Rethink your motives as well as your plans, and proceed. You will make gains if you are reasonable, hardworking and do what's best for you instead of trying to please everyone else. Physical fitness and health should be priorities. Your numbers are 4, 9, 20, 26, 33, 35, 41.

ARIES (March 21-April 19): Listen, evaluate what's said and consider how to proceed without making a fuss. Less talk and more action will help you finish what you start. Don't make a change under emotional duress. When in doubt, sit back and observe. ***

TAURUS (April 20-May 20): Emotional matters will leave you feeling vulnerable if faced with a spur-of-the-moment decision. Look on the bright side, and do what feels right and best for you. Don't limit what you can or should do to benefit others. ***

GEMINI (May 21-June 20): Stick to your game plan. If you begin to waffle, the people around you will lose confidence in you. Stand tall, and do your best to finish what you start, regardless of what others do. Make discipline and personal growth your targets. ***

CANCER (June 21-July 22): Mix things up a bit. All work and no play will leave you feeling as if you've missed something. An innovative approach to life will lead to interesting

conversations that will spark your imagination and encourage you to start something new. *****

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): Don't let the changes others put in place bother you. Remove yourself from situations that are melodramatic or manipulative. Look at what you can do to make your life better, and distance yourself from those who bring you down. **

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): Make a change that will encourage you to participate more and expand your interests and knowledge. A disciplined approach to your work will help you get finished ahead of time, giving you more time to do the things you enjoy. ****

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): Don't overreact or complain. If you don't like something, improve whatever is bothering you without making a fuss. How you go about getting things done will make a difference to the outcome as well as to your relationships with others. ***

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): Don't dismiss a unique idea. Flesh out what's required, and get started building what your imagination has conjured up. Trust your instincts, but don't be unrealistic when it comes to your budget. Set boundaries that will ensure success. ****

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): Listen to what's being said, and verify what you hear before you pass along the information. Personal gain and self-improvement should be your targets. If you care about someone, make a commitment that will bring you closer. Romance is in the stars. ***

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): Take advantage of an opportunity to make a change. Whether you alter the way you live or how you work, it will give you the boost you need to revitalize your long-term goal. A heart-to-heart talk will offer insight into a meaningful relationship. ****



AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): Don't limit what you can do. Put your responsibilities first, and finish what you start. Celebrate your success with someone who puts a smile on your face and is always in your corner. Choose love over emotional menacing. **



PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): Plan to do something that makes you happy or that will help you bring about a change that will enrich your life. Time spent on pampering will make you feel great, look great and give you added confidence. *****

Birthday Baby: You are possessive, intense and secretive. You are passionate and shy.

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SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku

By Dave Green

		9	2	6	4	8		
			3		5			
1								2
6	4						8	3
2								1
5	1						4	9
9								7
			8		6			
		1	9	3	2	5		

Difficulty Level ★★★

4/09

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Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Yesterday's Answer

5	8	2	6	9	7	3	1	4
4	9	1	2	8	3	5	7	6
3	6	7	1	5	4	8	9	2
2	5	9	8	1	6	7	4	3
7	1	8	4	3	5	6	2	9
6	3	4	9	7	2	1	8	5
9	2	5	7	6	1	4	3	8
1	4	6	3	2	8	9	5	7
8	7	3	5	4	9	2	6	1

Big Tally Level ★★★

STUMPED?

For answers to today's crossword, call 1-900-226-5955! 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

Bucs unveil new, yet familiar look for next season



TAMPA, Fla. (AP)—The Tampa Bay Buccaneers are all in for a new look in 2020.

Building on momentum created by the signing of six-time Super Bowl champion Tom Brady in free agency, the Bucs on Tuesday unveiled new uniforms for next season—a move that also figures to be embraced by fans.

Gone are jerseys sporting difficult to read digital alarm clock-style numbers, replaced by more traditional red, white and pewter ensembles similar to the uniforms the team wore from 1997-2013—the most successful stretch in franchise history.

The Bucs have missed the playoffs 12 consecutive seasons and haven't won a post-season game since their Super Bowl championship run 18 years ago.

"This new but familiar look is a direct result of the valuable feedback we received from our fans," team owner/co-chairman Ed Glazer said. "We are excited to return to our classic Super Bowl era uniforms while also introducing a sleek color rush uniform that showcases our signature pewter in a new and dramatic way."

In addition to red home and white away jerseys that will be worn with pewter or white pants, the team for the first time is introducing a pewter jersey that will be worn with matching pants and socks as part of its head-to-toe "color rush" ensemble.

Meanwhile, Ron Mix likes what he has seen and read regarding the new labor agreement between the NFL and its players.

The Pro Football Hall of Famer, a board member with the Pro Football Retired Players Association and a retired attorney, believes players from every generation will benefit from the deal struck last month that runs through the



In this handout released by the Tampa Bay Buccaneers Tuesday, April 7, 2020, from left, wide receiver Chris Godwin, linebacker Lavonte David, and linebacker Devin White, wear the team's new uniforms that they will debut during the 2020 NFL football season.

2030 season. Mix retired after the 1971 season.

"Ten years ago, the CBA helped correct the low pension benefits for retired players," Mix says. "A baseball player who played the same time as me and the same number of years and inducted into the Hall of Fame receives a pension of \$100,000 a year. My pension is \$20,000. The current players and owners should really be applauded for making sure the new CBA addressed the pensions and the needs of the thousands of players who left with broken bodies and minds."

"The new benefits are significant, improve players' benefits by doubling in many instances. Aside from approved benefits, the new formula calls for \$550 a month per vested

season. This increases the pension benefits significantly for all players."

Recently, the labor agreement's validity has been challenged by attorneys for safety Eric Reid, and questioned by others. They believe language changed from the deal the players voted on to the one now in force should void the agreement.

Mix prefers to concentrate on the positive aspects of the CBA that narrowly was approved by the NFL Players Association membership, 1,019-959.

"I was never troubled by the thought it may not pass," Mix says. "One of the things they did agree upon strongly was the increased pension and health benefits for retired players. Their disputes had to do with other parts of the CBA."

Newton feels like 'fish out of water'

In Charlotte, Cam Newton says he feels like a fish out of a water being a free agent for the first time in his nine-year NFL career.

Newton said during a conversation with Oklahoma City Thunder guard Chris Paul on Instagram Live on Monday that being released by the Carolina Panthers has left him with a chip on his shoulder that has "turned into family-size real quick."

Newton didn't give any indication where he might be interested in signing.

The 2015 league MVP played in only two games last season and is coming off surgery for a Lisfranc fracture in his foot. He also had surgery in the 2019 offseason for a

partially torn rotator cuff in his right shoulder.

Because players are not allowed at NFL facilities due to the coronavirus pandemic, Newton has not been able to visit any potential suitors and work out for teams to prove he's healthy.

"It's so much possibility for me right now, but the fact that this corona situation has hit, I'm not a person to blame or do any of that things," Newton said. "But at the same time, I think I have been affected in a lot of ways, and it's just (unfortunate). But at the end of the day, man, I'm going to let the ball play how it play and go from there."

The Panthers replaced Newton with free agent Teddy Bridgewater.

General manager Marty Hurney said Monday on a

conference call with reporters that releasing Newton was an extremely difficult decision. It was one of several moves Carolina made this offseason in an effort to remake the roster.

"You have to make very difficult decisions every year," Hurney said. "This was probably one of the most difficult. I drafted Cam. We all know everything he's brought to the organization both on and off the field, so it was extremely difficult."

As for the 30-year-old Newton, he's still looking for a new home.

"I've never not known anything other than the Carolina Panthers, and now it's like I want God to direct my path and put me in a position where I can thrive and be myself," Newton said.

About 6,500 athletes who already have earned their spots for the Tokyo Games are in for 2021 under redrawn qualifying regulations published Tuesday by the International Olympic Committee.

The IOC released its rewritten roadmap for qualifying for the games, which were rescheduled due to the coronavirus. They'll be held July 23 through Aug. 8 next year.

The new deadline for qualifying is June 29, 2021, and entry lists are due a week later. Individual international sports federations will still be in charge of their qualifying procedures.

Many sports allow athletes to qualify by compiling results over a series of events.

Athletes already qualified for Tokyo Games get to keep spots

The IOC urged the federations to find a balance "between protecting those athletes who were close to qualifying based on the previous 2020 deadlines and also ensuring the best athletes at the Olympic Games" by taking into consideration performances in 2021.

The IOC announcement confirmed reports last week that the sports had agreed to let athletes keep spots they already had earned. It clarified a number of points, including the need for boxing to relax a rule that sets the top age in the sport at 40. It also requires sports such as gymnastics to decide whether to allow ath-

letes who would've been too young to compete in 2020 to try to be eligible for 2021.

The IOC also said "athlete health is the guiding principle in the scheduling of any remaining Olympic qualification events." It urged sports not to confirm a rescheduling until the impacts of COVID-19 can be assessed.

Along those lines, World Athletics announced it was shutting down all qualifying procedures through Nov. 30. Its new window for qualifying will run from Dec. 1 through June 29, 2021.

Meanwhile, Sam Grewe

could end up missing the start of medical school to go to the Paralympics, and that will be fine with him.

With the games postponed until 2021, the Notre Dame student and Paralympic silver medalist in the high jump will face a packed senior year and graduation.

"I would expect an extra element to the sense of urgency for the training next year," the American said. "I might miss my first two weeks of medical school to be in Tokyo, which is so far from ideal ... but I wouldn't miss Tokyo for anything."

Along with the Olympics, the Paralympics have been pushed back to 2021 because of the coronavirus pandemic. The new dates are Aug. 24-Sept. 5.

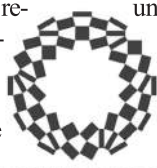
For many Paralympians, a delay seemed like the only option amid lockdowns around the world. Paralympic athletes often have specific medical and training needs which can't always be met at a time when people are staying home and doctors are helping out overloaded ERs.

"Sports are important but I think health is more important, frankly, and I think that this postponement has really, I would hope, enabled athletes to pause from those immedi-

ate concerns to train and really to prioritize their own health," said Dr. Cheri Blauwet, who won a Paralympic gold medal in wheelchair racing for the United States in 2004.

Specialized facilities are closed, leaving athletes training at home off video guidance from coaches. Different athletes are affected in different ways.

Visually impaired runners train and compete with a guide, and can't necessarily meet up with them while complying with social distancing rules. Sprinters' carbon-fiber "blade" prosthetics work great on a track, but aren't suited for asphalt or grass. Wheelchair rims can transmit the virus onto the user's hands if not disinfected regularly.



TOKYO 2020

NBA to finish season on Labor Day weekend



NEW YORK—On Monday, NBA commissioner Adam Silver talked about the league's plans to return from its coronavirus shutdown.

While he said the uncertainty about the course of the pandemic leaves the league with a lot of unknowns, he said for sure that no decision on the fate of the season would be made until May at the earliest.

As for a last possible date for when the season needs to be completed? Silver said that there was "too little information to make those sorts of projections."

But ESPN's Adrian Wojnarowski reports that the league has a date in mind—Labor Day weekend, which concludes on Sept. 7.

"I've been told Labor Day weekend, that they'd like to have a champion crowned by Labor Day weekend," Wojnarowski said on "Get Up" Tuesday morning.

He said that the Labor Day deadline wasn't a hard one—that league owners would consider a scenario that saw the NBA Finals extend later into the second week of September. But the concern of pushing it later risks further delay to starting the 2020-21 season.

That raises an interesting question. If the NBA is able to resume play late in the summer, should it prioritize getting a full slate in next season over completing this season and crowning a champion? The 2019-20 season is almost complete. Most teams have 16 or 17 games remaining on their schedules.

So if the choice came down to conducting the playoffs or getting next season underway, why would the league prioritize relatively meaningless early-season games over crowning a champion?

Of course, there will become a point when it's time to move forward, and that's the consideration here in an increasingly complicated landscape for the NBA and other sports leagues to navigate.



AP
In this March 10, 2020 file photo, Los Angeles Lakers' Anthony Davis (3) is surrounded by Brooklyn Nets players during the second half of an NBA game in Los Angeles.

Meanwhile, the Los Angeles Lakers plan to ask senior-level staff to voluntarily undergo salary cuts as the league remains shuttered during the coronavirus pandemic, according to multiple reports.

A report from The Athletic classifies the request as deferments, while ESPN reports that the ask is for a 20 percent pay cut that mirrors the salary reductions undertaken by high-level

league executives, including NBA commissioner Adam Silver.

Employees being asked to take the cuts are not named in the reports. They presumably include senior-level staffers like general manager Rob Pelinka whose salaries are protected by contracts.

Sources told The Los Angeles Times and ESPN that the asks will be made in an effort to avoid cuts to

lower-level staffers, who are likely at-will employees and don't have the same salary or job protection as contracted employees.

The Lakers are majority owned by the Buss family trust and managed by team president Jeanie Buss, the 58-year-old daughter of late majority owner Jerry Buss. The Buss family trust owns 66 percent of the team, according to ESPN. Forbes estimates

that the Lakers are worth \$4.4 billion.

The deferments will last until mid-December or the first regular-season game of the 2020-21 season, whichever comes first, according to the Times.

The NBA hasn't contested games since suspending its season on March 11 after Utah Jazz center Rudy Gobert tested positive for COVID-19. The decision set off a domino effect of major U.S. sports leagues suspending play as the pandemic took hold domestically.

Bulls looking at Nuggets GM

Front office stability has been a gift and curse for the Chicago Bulls, a marquee franchise that's finally beginning to act like one.

Team president and COO Michael Reinsdorf, son of managing partner Jerry Reinsdorf, has taken more of a leading role in the last couple of seasons and is spearheading the search to hire a new top basketball executive.

Multiple sources said that Denver Nuggets general manager Arturas Karnisovas is the leader in the clubhouse. Karnisovas has a strong draft record and is known to be good in player development, two of the bullet points the Bulls have earmarked for their next top basketball executive.

John Paxson and Gar Forman have yo-yo'd in the top chair for the better part of two decades, but after a moderately successful run ended following the Tom Thibodeau years, the franchise hasn't reclaimed any identity and has made very little progress.

Some of the early identified candidates—Miami's Adam Simon and Indiana's Chad Buchanan—have turned down the Bulls' attempts to interview them. Michael Reinsdorf isn't deterred from that, because it's more likely Simon and Buchanan used the overtures to get raises from their current employers as opposed to not viewing the Bulls as a desirable option.

The Bulls also interviewed Utah Jazz executive Justin Zanik, who has Chicago ties, but the Jazz organization seems intent on keeping him.

ATLANTA (AP)—C.T. Pan could become a footnote in history at Augusta National. Imagine qualifying for his first Masters and then having to wait 571 days before he can hear the most understated announcement in golf.

"Fore, please. C.T. Pan now driving."

One week after Tiger Woods slipped on a fifth green jacket, Pan won the RBC Heritage at Hilton Head to qualify for the Masters the following April.

And now April is November.

Charles Howell III has a strong bias, having grown up a few miles away from Augusta National, but he speaks for the majority when he says, "Any Masters is better than no Masters."

Monday's announcement of the reconfigured schedule offered no guarantees, only something to anticipate.

And that's going to have

Masters in November is better than no Masters at all

to suffice for now, considering no one is even sure when golf or any other sport will resume because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

"It's nice to put the carrots out there in front of us," Graeme McDowell said Tuesday.

The PGA Championship in August? That's where it used to be. The U.S. Open in September? It's happened before, though not in the last 107 years.

The Masters in November is what stands out.

Augusta National is all about white dogwoods and pink azaleas. The Masters is a sure signal of spring, complemented by the opening week of Major League Baseball.

It was supposed to end on Easter Sunday. Not it will start two weeks before Thanksgiving.

ing. Tiger Woods had planned on serving steak and chicken fajitas, and sushi out on the deck of the clubhouse. Does he switch to turkey and dressing?

The Masters is scheduled for Nov. 12-15. Mobile devices are not allowed on the grounds during tournament days, meaning no one will be looking at their phones to check football scores. Will the locals with season badges give up Saturday's third round and head to Athens to watch Georgia play Tennessee, or to Atlanta to see Notre Dame play Georgia Tech?

Kevin Kisner once left Atlanta after the third round of the Tour Championship, two shots off the lead, to take a helicopter to Georgia's game against Mis-

issippi State. Would he leave the Masters to see Georgia play Tennessee?

"I would not," he said.

These are the kind of nuances never presented at a Masters.

Spring blooms will give way to fall foliage, making it a different kind of Masters. The weather can be an issue, but that's true in April. Think back to 2007 when the wind chill never got higher than 47 degrees for the third round, and the scoring was the highest since 1956.

As for the course?

Trevor Immelman, who won the 2008 Masters, has played in November. He knows what Augusta National can do, which seems to be just about

anything.

The club closes every year in May—it closed in March this year due to the new coronavirus—and the grass goes dormant until it is overseeded with rye ahead of the re-opening in October.

Chairman Fred Ridley said Augusta National "identified" Nov. 12-15 as the intended dates. Was that because the later date improved chances of a return to normal in sports, or because an extra month would allow the course to be the best it can be? Maybe a little of both.

"I don't think it would be all that different other than the obvious aesthetic differences between spring and fall," Immelman said. "The massive wild card is Mother Nature. ... That

change in temperature along with the possibility of that northerly wind that can blow is going to be the big difference."

He said three of the par 5s—all but No. 2—could have wind in the face, perhaps limiting eagles or birdies.

"I do think playing it in November—and I've done that many times—the scoring won't quite be as low as what we're used to over the last few years," he said.

The winner still gets a green jacket and a lifetime exemption.

The Masters not only set a new date, it filled out its field—96 players, regardless of what happens until November. Four players were added to the field by being among the Top 50 in the world—McDowell, Collin Morikawa, Scottie Scheffler, and Christian Be-zuidenhout.



Players, managers intrigued by MLB's all-Arizona option



PHOENIX
(AP)—Boston's Chris Sale, out for

the season following Tommy John surgery, thought about the prospect of his teammates sequestered in the Phoenix area for an extended period if Major League Baseball and its players adopt an all-Arizona start to the season.

"I don't know if I could look at my kids just through a screen for four or five months. Same thing goes with my wife," the pitcher said Tuesday. "That's a long time. But people have done it in harsh scenarios, I guess. I think there's a lot of figuring out to do."

Putting all 30 teams in the Phoenix area this season and playing in empty ballparks was among the ideas discussed Monday during a call among five top officials from MLB and the players' association that was led by Commissioner Rob Manfred, people familiar with the discussion told The Associated Press. They spoke to the AP on condition of anonymity because no details were announced.

With its season delayed due to the new coronavirus, both sides are searching for ways to get under way. Kansas City manager Mike Matheny would feel privileged to help the country return to a semblance of normalcy and provide an escape for fans.

"Just jump in and trust that

PUSH

From Page 20

An oversight committee is in charge of the Commonwealth's preparation for the hosting of the 2021 Mini Games and its members and officials are expected to discuss the PGC's request.

The quadrennial event will feature six sports—athletics, badminton, baseball, beach volleyball, golf, and triathlon—and will be hosted by the CNMI for the first time.

PAGARAO

From Page 20

son-debut win over TanHoldings Football Club, 4-1.

The Kanoa striker is just slightly ahead of her teammate Paulyn Joyce and TanHoldings' Katrina Costales, who registered three goals apiece after two matches. Joyce notched a pair of goals in their first victory this season and added one more in Kanoa's triumph over Shirley's last month. Costales, on the other hand, posted all her three goals in TanHoldings' 6-1 win over Shirley's.

Meanwhile, two more TanHoldings players—Kaithlyn Chavez and Brittany Wally—are very much in the race for the



AP
Arizona Diamondbacks starting pitcher Madison Bumgarner warms up prior to a spring training baseball game against the Kansas City Royals Monday, March 9, 2020, in Scottsdale, Ariz.

could be expanded from 26. With teams isolated and the status of minor leagues uncertain, extra players also could be kept in the group.

Money matters

How much would it cost to put teams and the personnel that travel with them in hotels for double the usual time (no true home games, except for the D-Backs)? There presumably would be savings with not needing charter flights for road trips, but what percentage of that cost was committed in advance? In addition, the absence of ticket revenue would be damaging for many teams. Would player salaries be cut? Who gets to sell stadium signage?

Home field advantage

Would the 15 spring training tenant teams in Arizona always get the home clubhouses? Would they have an advantage from playing in the ballparks during the exhibition season?

The tube

Playing in empty ballparks would keep the money flowing from regional sports networks and the national television contracts with Fox, ESPN and Turner. There might even be expanded national broadcasts.

Replay

Spring training ballparks are not wired for video review. Would it be worth the cost or would MLB go back to the pre-2008 human eye standard?

Schedules

With teams in the same area, would three- and four-game series be standard or would MLB mix it up? During spring training, teams usually switch opponents on a daily basis.

we may not know when we'll reconnect with our families, and trust that when health officials decide it's OK we'll be able to do that," Matheny said. "But in the meantime, do something that would really help the healing process."

Baseball officials intend to study which options may be viable economically and would gain necessary approvals. The league said it has not yet sought approval of any plan from federal, state and local officials, or from the players' association.

"MLB has been actively considering numerous contingency plans that would allow play to commence once the public health situation has improved to the point that it is safe to do so," the commissioner's office said in a statement. "While we have discussed the idea of staging games at one location as one potential option, we have not settled on that option or developed a detailed plan."

Arizona has 10 spring training ballparks plus the Arizona Diamondbacks' Chase Field

all within about 50 miles. Phoenix Municipal Stadium—Oakland's old spring training base and now Arizona State's stadium—is an option along with Grand Canyon's Brazell Field.

Chase Field could host several games each day following its switch to an artificial surface ahead of the 2019 season.

"We would not have been able to do it with grass, but now with the synthetic grass, absolutely," Diamondbacks President Derrick Hall said.

Baseball's look would be different in empty ballparks. Players from the Orioles and the Chicago White Sox still recall playing in a deserted Camden Yards in 2015 when civil unrest caused a closed-doors game. The game sped along in 2 hours, 3 minutes.

"It was a weird feeling having nobody in the stands," said Sale, a member of those White Sox. "But sometimes you got to adapt. Sometimes you got to do some things for the greater good of what's going on around you."

That was a one-off. This

would be every day, pretty much 15 games a day.

"My sense is that it divorces the game from the fans except via television, and that's a mistake," former Commissioner Fay Vincent said. "I don't think a televised game without an audience and without fan reaction is a great idea. I think it's born in desperation. I'm a traditionalist and a bit of a romantic. I think we ought to wait until we can present the game in its best light."

Phoenix Mayor Kate Gallego maintained player and public health would be the top priorities.

"There is not a person on the planet who doesn't want to get back to a time and place marked by familiarity, and there is nothing more familiar than sports, especially the great American pastime of baseball," she said in a statement. "All of our lives post-COVID-19 will look different. At the city we value flexibility and innovation and are willing to work with the many different sports franchises that call Phoenix home, but only

if public health leads every single discussion."

Former manager Jim Leyland thinks the game will return to the field at some point this year.

"I do applaud people that are trying to be creative and come up with different ideas," he said. "At the end of the day, they'll come up with some type of a wonderful package. It's just a matter of when that's going to be allowed."

Starting the season in Arizona presents plenty of complications:

Some like it hot

Temperatures average a high of 105 in Phoenix in June and the thermometer has just started to dip at 5 p.m., when presumably many games would start in order to be in prime time on the East Coast. Chase Field's retractable roof and air conditioning could make it a site of doubleheaders and even tripleheaders.

Expanded rosters

Given the heat and the compacted schedule, active rosters



Golden Boot award as they have scored two goals apiece. Shirley's Jannah Casarino is the third player to earn two goals early in the season in Division A, while Kanoa's Sharmaine Francisco, Kristelle Itaas, and Stephanie Flores and Shirley's Marinel Falalimpa have one each.

In Division B, Brennfeck and Hix are tied for the lead after making five goals apiece.

Brennfeck had a rousing

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MP United Football Club 1's Somia Quan, right, kicks the ball out during their game against Shirley's Football Club in the 2020 Dove Women's Spring League last month at the NMI Soccer Training Center in Koblerville.

start this season after drilling a hat trick in Paire's 5-0 demolition of Kanoa and then collected twin goals in their shutout win over MP United 2 last March 11, 4-0.

Hix joined Brennfeck on top after firing four goals and lifting TanHoldings to a 10-1 triumph over MP United 1 last month. Hix's other goal was logged in their 6-1 win against MP United 2 during the league's opening week in February.

At close second behind Hix and Brennfeck are the former's teammate, Rizza Relucio and MP United 1's Ivan Clare Gozum. Relucio bagged two goals apiece in their victory over MP United 1 and 2, while Gozum had a pair in their draw to Shir-

ley's and one each versus TanHoldings and MP United 2.

Other players with multiple goals in Division B are MP United 1's Somia Quan (three), Heather Zona, (three), and Kayla Atalig (two), Shirley's Football Club's Marielle Gariguez (three) and Megan Elayda (three), TanHoldings' Julie Capayas (2), and Paire's Lindsay Davis (two).

TanHoldings' Catherine and Claire Barrozo and Judy Ann Andebor, MP United 1's Samantha Babauta, MP United 2's Bunruang Brasuelle, Paire's Natalie Hill-Beyer and Michelle Masga, and Shirley's Elaine Enriquez, Stephanie Lumbad, Jhaza Mirano, and Bernadette Horey have scored one so far.



Bucs unveil new,
yet familiar look
for next season

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NBA to finish
season on
Labor Day
weekend

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SAIPAN TRIBUNE

PACIFIC GAMES COUNCIL'S REQUEST

'Push back 2021 Mini Games'



OCEANIA ATHLETICS ASSOCIATION

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

The CNMI's Traven Quitugua, center, competes in the 100m run in last year's Oceania Athletics Championships in Australia. Runners across the Pacific are supposed to come to Saipan, as athletics is included in the sports to be played in the 2021 Pacific Mini Games.

The Pacific Games Council has requested the CNMI to consider changing the dates for the 2021 Pacific Mini Games.

The request, according to PGC chief executive officer Andrew Minogue, was made last week after the International Olympic Committee announced the new dates for the 2020 Olympic Games in

Japan. The Tokyo Olympics 2020, which is originally set to kick off this July but has been postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic, will now take place from July 23 to Aug. 8, 2021.

When the new schedule of the Tokyo Olympics was decided, it is expected that several major sporting events will be affected by the revised dates. These include the 2021 Pacific Mini Games, which is slated for June. Majority of the participating countries in the Pacific Mini Games will also send delegates to the Olympic Games, so conflict of schedule is likely to happen.

"Our member-countries, the

majority of them are Olympic Committees who are responsible for taking delegations of athletes not only to Saipan but also to Tokyo," Minogue was quoted as saying in a report from Radio New Zealand last Monday. "That's a particular challenge so we've advised our friends up in the Northern Marianas to start looking at some alternative dates that they may

wish to hold the Games."

Minogue, in an email to *Saipan Tribune* last Tuesday, also said there is no any pressure on the NMI to decide immediately on the new dates.

"We know they have to liaise with the governor, the schools, and other stakeholders. PGC will patiently await the setting of new dates, if indeed the dates need to be changed," said Mi-

nogue, as he acknowledged that everybody's priority now is how to combat the pandemic and use the government's resources to assist the affected members of the community.

The PGC official finds moving the Mini Games to late 2021 or early 2022 beneficial to the host island, as it will give the CNMI more time to prepare and recover from the crisis.

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ROSELYN B. MONROYO

Kanoa Football Club's Irish Pagarao, left, takes a shot during their game against TanHoldings Football Club in the 2020 Dove Women's Spring League last month at the NMI Soccer Training Center in Koblerville.

Pagarao leads; Brennfleck, Hix tied

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

Dove Women's League Kanoa Football Club's Irish Pagarao, Paire's Shawna Brennfleck, and TanHoldings Football Club's Tamia Hix are the top contenders for the Golden Boot awards in their respective divisions early into the 2020 Dove Women's Spring League.

Pagarao plays in Division A and her four goals put her in first place in the rankings of players with the most goals in the competition, which is still suspended due to the COVID-19 pandemic. She jumped to the top spot after delivering a hat trick in their 6-3 victory over Shirley's Football Club last March 11. Pagarao earlier got one goal in Kanoa's sea-

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Hix



Brennfleck